JANUARY 22-28, 2014 | VOLUME 33 | NUMBER 1

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SF WEEKLY

The COMEDY ISSUE

Dissecting the joke to understand it better.

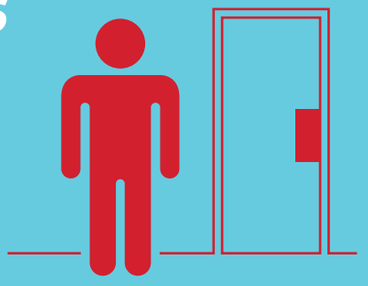
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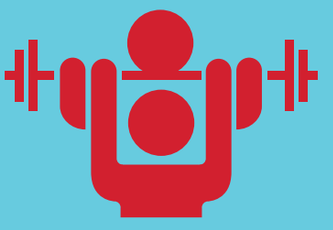
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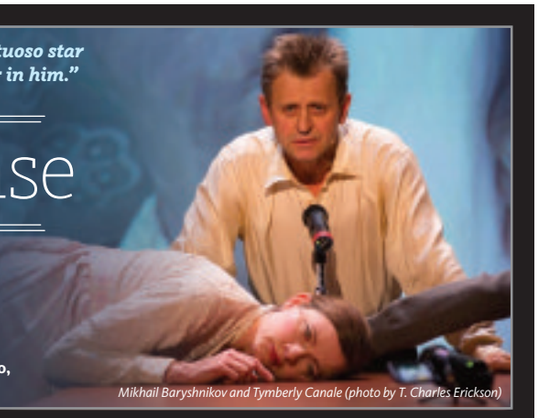
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Mikhail Baryshnikov and Tymberly Canale (photo by T. Charles Erickson)

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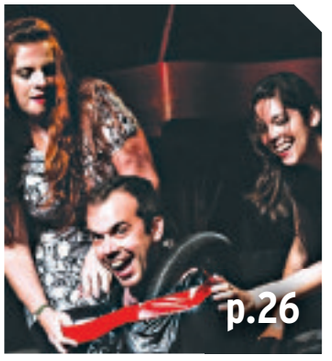
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THE COMEDY ISSUE

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THIS TASTES FUNNY

I went in hoping for a good meal at a comedy club. The joke was on me.
By Anna Roth
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"People have become zombies, they've become so ingrained in their own personal world that they've literally fallen off the face of the Earth."

BRANDAN P. COMMENTING ON "S.F. CALLS ON MAYOR ED LEE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THESE PEDESTRIAN ACCIDENTS – *NOW*"

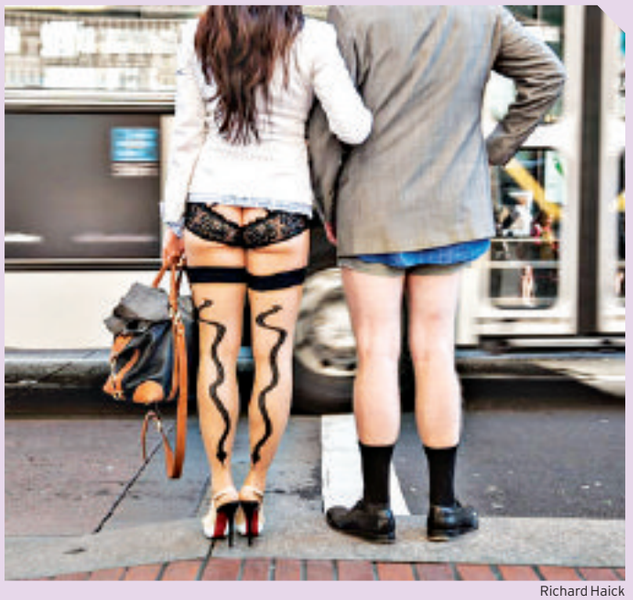
FAUX REALITY

***The Real World* isn't dead yet:** Confidence is sexy, along with a quick wit and intellect ["Playing Against Archetype," Arts & Culture, 1/15]. It seems I might just tune in after browsing through her bios.
Nia N.

BLOG COMMENTS OF THE WEEK

No need for elaborate stunts, there are simple ways to reduce pedestrian fatalities: A pie-in-the-sky article if ever there was one ["Here's How We Can Really Achieve Zero Pedestrian Deaths in San Francisco," Leif Haven, the Snitch, 1/17]. What can the public really do? Perhaps one-way streets — I cannot count how many times I could not see pedestrians crossing the street because they were obscured on account of headlights from oncoming traffic. More traffic lights — people usually stop for those. And better street lighting! S.F. is dark at night in most places. This city is the worst traffic-engineered city I have ever lived in. It practically forces you to make illegal turns just to get where you're going, and everyone does it.
Steven P.

Photo of the week from **SFWEEKLY.COM/SLIDESHOW**:



Richard Haick

No Pants BART Ride 2014

It's the individual's fault, not the mayor's: It's very simple, people have become zombies, they've become so ingrained in their own personal world that they've literally fallen off the face of the Earth ["S.F. Calls on Mayor Ed Lee to Do Something About These Pedestrian Accidents — *Now*," Erin Sherbert, the Snitch, 1/15]. They walk/bike staring at or listening to their phones, with complete and total disregard with life around them. Why does our mayor have to do anything?
Brandan P.

Support local businesses over chains: Boo, no, shop local businesses ["Dunkin Donuts is Coming!" Pete Kane, SFoodie, 1/15]. I don't eat doughnuts, but there are definitely some local shops that sell doughnuts around San Francisco!
Deva O.

Spoiled brats: I don't know what this show is, but I'd still argue that it has nothing to do with being rich and everything to do with how their parents raised them ["#RichKids is Descending on San Francisco for a Game of Finders Keepers," Mollie McWilliams, the Exhibitionist, 1/14]. Money does not equate with class.
Meredith O.

CORRECTION

In last week's feature ["The Wireless," Rachel Swan, feature, 1/15] we had two errors: We misidentified the date of a courtroom appearance by five of Joseph Ortiz's alleged associates; it happened on Dec. 20, 2013. We also misidentified the place where peace activist Drew Hendricks is from, he is from Washington state. *SF Weekly* regrets these errors.

LETTERS POLICY

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Phone Jack

The promise of a Wi-fi city is beset by analog-era problems.

By Rachel Swan

Free Wi-fi came to Market Street last month with all the fanfare of a coronation. It didn't quite approach the citywide installment plan that former Mayor Gavin Newsom and former Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin devised in 2007, but it was certainly a step forward. Coupled with a July installment plan to bring Internet service to the city's parks, the mid-Market rollout would give more pedestrians the luxury of traversing San Francisco's main retail corridor with their heads buried in their devices. More importantly, the city could finally align its amenities with its ascendant economy.

Sort of.

After several unsuccessful attempts to join the free network — via a slightly eviscerated but nonetheless functional iPhone 4S — this reporter called the city's Department of Technology for help. Department spokesman Ron Vinson expressed surprise at the scattershot service, questioned the quality of said iPhone, and then recommended an Internet primer on Wi-fi.

"You're our first complaint," he said, adding that he'd whipped out a laptop while eating lunch around Seventh and Market streets that same afternoon, and found the Wi-fi service perfectly adequate.

In fact, local politico John Rizzo also groused about spotty service shortly after the Wi-fi rollout. "Free Wi-fi on Market Street?" he tweeted on Jan. 5. "Doesn't work in shops & merchants warn me not to use outdoors due to rampant device theft."

Rizzo explains, later, that he'd tried to access Levi's website to order a pair of jeans that weren't available in the Market Street store, but clerks warned against it. "They said, 'Oh, the Wi-fi doesn't work in our shops,'" Rizzo says. "So I said, 'OK, I'll go outside.' And then they said, 'Oh, I wouldn't do that if I were you.'"



Merchants at Levi's, Old Navy, and the Adidas store all confirm that brick-and-mortar shops on Market comprise a vast Wi-fi desert. In contrast, the shops inside Westfield mall have ample free Wi-fi, and even more ample opportunity to snatch devices from the people playing with them. There's even an ecoATM kiosk on the mall's bottom floor that allows users to exchange smartphones for cash — though various security features make it a poor place to fence a stolen phone.

For the bravest among us, there's the outdoor service, which should work perfectly, provided you're not attempting to beam Wi-fi from a busted 4S. You can always use a backup computer to consult Vinson's webpage. Or you can call the Department of Technology to troubleshoot the problem. Or you can be one of those pedestrians staring distractedly at an iPhone, in an area known for rampant iPhone theft.

The future is upon us.

Long-Distance Call

Dialing City Hall results in a blast from the past.

A long time ago, Alex Tourk left his position as Gavin Newsom's deputy chief of staff to run the mayor's re-election bid. Newsom repaid his friend's loyalty and devotion by carrying on an affair with Tourk's then-wife — who also happened to be Newsom's appointments secretary.

So, Tourk departed City Hall about as definitively as anyone can. Those dialing (415) 554-6299, however, can still reach him on his City Hall phone line. His cheery greeting — "It's Friday, September first" — reveals the year to be 2006.

Tourk's erstwhile extension has somehow eluded city policies meant to cull unnecessary lines for seven years and four months. Had he been a mere intern, his department's "phone access coordinator" would likely have had the Department of Technology nix the extension within hours of his leaving the building. More established employees often record forwarding messages like Tourk's; Ron Vinson, the Department of Technology's chief marketing officer, notes his former voicemail was kept active for six months.

That's only 92 months fewer than Tourk's.

Tourk, unsurprisingly, was taken aback to learn his 2006 iteration still answers the phone at City Hall. He encourages anyone looking for him to call his firm, Ground Floor Public Affairs, at (415) 291-9501. ***JE***

Transit on Trial

Our Muni cover story spurs a public hearing.

Earlier this month, an *SF Weekly* cover story revealed an intriguing handshake arrangement between Muni and bus manufacturer New Flyer.

The company built and transported a platoon of $700,000 hybrids to clandestine East Bay warehouses, all without the benefit of any paperwork or money changing hands, and weeks prior to the oblivious Board of Supervisors approving the $38.3 million contract. This handshake deal also nixed an in-house Muni competition between rival hybrid propulsion systems, meaning the 50 new buses were all equipped with hybrid components manufactured by the British munitions titan BAE.

That's the company responsible for the propulsion systems in the city's current crop of hybrids, described by Muni transit director John Haley as "an embarrassment … our newest buses and our worst performers."

Supervisor David Campos is inclined to agree. Last week he called for a public hearing before the board's Government Audit and Oversight Committee to address lingering questions regarding the bizarre manner in which these buses were obtained, and nagging concerns about their reliability. The material covered in our story — and Campos' subsequent communications with Muni higher-ups — have left him scratching his head.

"The fundamental issue is, is this really how we want to do contracting? I think the answer is no," he says.

While New Flyer purportedly assumed all risks in the event the supervisors deigned to vote down the pending contract, this was an arrangement undertaken without the benefit of paperwork — leaving Muni in a precarious position had things gone badly. Similar undocumented deals have resulted in irate vendors suing the city, Campos notes. "And even if you win, it's expensive."

The supervisor seemed most puzzled, however, by the decision to hurriedly consummate this handshake deal and equip all the buses with BAE hybrid systems — despite an ongoing Muni analysis of whether BAE or Allison hybrid drives are performing better on the streets of San Francisco. Haley admitted to *SF Weekly* that Muni may just have rush-ordered 50 buses its own testing will reveal to be the inferior vehicles.

"If you're going through a process of analyzing which hybrid system is more reliable, and if you have buses underperforming to the point you feel there's a need to do that, why would you just go ahead and make an investment in one of those systems before the analysis is even completed?" asks Campos, who hopes to hold the hearing as soon as next month. "Wouldn't you want to know what the results are before you make your investment? If it was your money, you'd want to know that."

Funny thing: It *is* your money. ***Joe Eskenazi***

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Last Call for Know-It-Alls

A classic specimen of old-San Francisco bon vivantery leaves more or less under his own power.

An ever-present, chilled glass of Ancient Age bourbon awaits Harold "H." Brown in his 96-square-foot room in the Tenderloin.

A pair of "guard chihuahuas" loudly monitor the mounds of detritus spilling out of a neighboring room and piling up in the hallway, and the ever-present cacophony of McAllister Street wafts in through his fourth-story window.

For the past 10 years, this has been the soundtrack to Brown's life. He knocks back the bourbon, inhales a lungful of (doctor's-orders) pot, and, as ever, holds court.

"When I was 18, I was arrested in downtown Casablanca in a bullfighting ring at a Ray Charles concert for being an American spy."

Well, that's a hell of a way to start a story. Not many people can. And, within a few months, the only person in this city able to do so figures to be gone.

Brown has been banished from just about every comments section of every news site in town. Abrasive behavior in the offline realm, commonly known as reality, has resulted in his ejection from many a drinking establishment, even those run by close, personal friends. Gratuitous bellicosity has led to his expulsion from candidate's forums, too — which is unusual, since he was the candidate. But no one ever accused Brown of being usual. He's run for supervisor in Districts 2, 3, 5, and 6 despite not really living in all of those places — the rare benefit of homelessness. He ran for mayor in 2007, along with a pack of no-hope earnest city residents, lunatics, and earnest city lunatics.

He didn't win.

And now, for a change, he's leaving without being asked. Or told. Brown, 69, has announced he's departing San Francisco, the city he first visited in 1966 and has called home since 1980. He's not a victim of gentrification. He's not an allegory for the mass exodus of non-elites from the city of $4 toast.

Brown is so sui generis — an elfin, formerly homeless teacher, firefighter, jazz-club impresario, prodigious writer, and six-time divorcee with a voracious appetite for city meetings and marijuana, simultaneously — that he's not a natural springboard into those bigger discussions about larger issues. And yet, his strange, charmed existence here says a lot about this city of ours.



H. Brown has got it made here. He knows this. And that's why he must go.

Luke Thomas

Every town has its share of profane, hard-drinking know-it-alls. In San Francisco, however, Brown rubs shoulders with the city's political elite. He's on friendly terms or better with powerful elected and appointed officials. Men — and they are invariably men — knock off moving and shaking at City Hall, ascend the four flights of stairs at Brown's antiseptic residential hotel, and knock off fifths of bourbon in the densely packed cubicle where Brown sleeps on an old yoga mat. City functionaries responsible for moving around billions of dollars respond to his calls and e-mail blasts, even the unhinged missives coming at odd hours. He house-sits for them and feeds their pets. "H. is, quintessentially, a San Francisco guy," says former board President Matt Gonzalez, a longtime Brown buddy. "We're a small enough city to accommodate that kind of access. And he's wicked smart."

San Francisco is, above all, a tolerant place. Brown has been kicked out of municipal buildings, homes, recreation centers, bars, moving vehicles, and anywhere somebody can be forced to leave by somebody else. But he always came back. And he was, amazingly enough, usually welcome.

And that's why he's going.

H. Brown ambles through the Tenderloin, occasionally ducking into a thrift shop to pick up trinkets and flowers and jewelry he can bestow upon all he sees like a marijuana-scented Santa. He stops in at the Salvation Army for the $1.25 senior lunch at 11 a.m. like clockwork. The meal on a recent Monday is an indeterminate but tasty fried hunk of meat with beets and steamed vegetables; he spends most of his time regaling his fellow diners and watching *Meet Me in St. Louis* on the big screen, and ends up taking two-thirds of the meal home in several Tupperware containers. He then perambulates to the Tenderloin police station to drop off a zip key of downloaded British cop shows for the station captain. He nods at the cops. He nods at the dealers. He nods at the bleary-eyed men nodding off. Everyone nods back. "The key," Brown says, "is knowing when you've got it made."

Brown knows. "I can go to sleep and wake up any fucking time I want. I got plenty of dope for free because I'm a senior. I got all the food I can possibly fucking have. I got it made. I know I got it made."

In a city where everyone is working harder and spending more, Brown isn't working at all and his big splurge was a dollar on McDonald's Big Mac and Fries salt-and-pepper shakers he gifted to your humble narrator. He's happy. He's content. Too happy. Too content.

"Khalil Gibran said, 'The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain.' But if you have only whipped cream, you don't appreciate it. You need to have some fucking pepper with the sugar and shit."

Brown exhales a pungent cloud of smoke and shakes his head. "I'm not enjoying it here anymore. It's all whipped cream."

Anecdotes regarding F. Scott Fitz-gerald's propensity to leap into fountains, arrive at parties in pajamas, or boil guests' watches in tomato soup make for good copy. For those subjected to such erratic behavior in person, however, the experience was likely not entertaining — and perhaps depressing or even terrifying. Stories of H. Brown's inspired boorishness ring similarly; it's one thing to chuckle over tales of an acid wit clearing out a bar with his belligerent talk. It's another to be cleared out.

If comedy is indeed tragedy plus time, however, Brown will leave 'em laughing for posterity. Friend after friend recalled anecdotes of offensive, bourbon-fueled behavior invariably culminating with Brown being instructed to "Get the fuck out, H.!" But, always, these were happy memories, if not happy occasions.

The folks recalling these tragi-comedies were former supervisors, consultants, academics, political Svengalis, and other city luminaries. Brown's encyclopedic knowledge of local government and deep institutional memory got him through the door. But what kept him from being tossed out of it — for good, at least — was his oversize personality. "Am I boring?" he asks, needlessly.

"A lot of folks in public life value people with money or access or that sort of thing," says former Supervisor Chris Daly, a Brown "drinking partner and friend and sworn enemy." Other city politicos, however, "value people who are interesting."

Brown is interesting. And he shows up at events, whether you like it or not. And he offers denizens of City Hall constant feedback — whether you like it or not — forming a symbiotic relationship with the egocentric types who hold public office and are desperate for attention.

But, above all, the man is fascinating and unique in a town where that, itself, is growing unique.

Brown chalks up his arrest at a Ray Charles concert held at a Casablanca bullring to "Moroccans not appreciating public drunkenness." When asked for ID, all he had were his Navy papers. That wasn't good enough, and he was detained. Before long, a Swiss diplomat showed up and drove him at high speed back to Sidi Yahia in a huge Mercedes. The next day, the base's guards were forced to don Hawaiian shirts — Brown had inadvertently divulged the existence of a "secret base," he says. Gaudy apparel was now preferable to military garb.

So, that was one adventure. And now it's time for another. "I'm turning 70 and I only have so many years left," he says. "I think I'll go into abject poverty and misery and shit. But it'll be different."

Joe.Eskenazi@SFWeekly.com

The Snatch

Never mistaking anything for anything else.

SAFEWAY TO HEAVEN

A taxi driver who mistook a walkway for an auto exit managed to strand his cab on the stairs last week at the Market and Church Safeway. Tom Nguyen, a manager at Vina Cab, told *SF Weekly* that driver Tseo Tran is "new to the job." Nguyen said the tenderfoot driver "on his way out, didn't know that wasn't an exit." The result was a marooned taxi and Internet immortality. Paul Rose, a spokesman for the Municipal Transportation Agency, says the investigation into what happened is ongoing. Nguyen, however, chalks it up to simple inexperience. Tran, his manager concludes, "is really very sorry."

A HEALTHY NO. 2

A new study released last week confirms what other studies have already said about us: San Franciscans are some of the trimmest people in the nation. Health blog NerdWallet ranked our rolling city the second healthiest community in the nation. Even better, we beat out Seattle and Portland. And because you are wondering, Boston is the only city that's fitter than us. It stands to reason: San Francisco's steep landscape provides residents with a built-in interval exercise program that no treadmill could offer (at least when it comes to a scenic workout). "San Francisco is a year-round paradise for fitness gurus and outdoor adventurers, thanks to the habitually temperate weather and plenty of parks, walking paths and steep hills. Nearly 45 percent of San Francisco residents are at a healthy weight, perhaps because it's been dubbed the best city for weight loss and home to the healthiest eaters," writes NerdWallet. "And in its fifth annual survey, *Women's Health* magazine ranked San Francisco as the best city for women's health." And of course, knowing there's a taco stand or a bar in the far-off distance will motivate the laziest among us to march those hills.

For more news, go to blogs.sfweekly.com/thesnitch

A Toxic Relationship: Sports, Drugs, And The Fans Who Need Them

A while back, I spent part of the morning in a medical office in an East Bay office park, waiting for a man to emerge from a hyperbaric chamber. A competitive athlete in arguably the toughest discipline, combat sports, his oxygen fix was part of his pre-fight routine — that, and smearing great gobs of a marijuana-infused goo over his body to chase away the aches that come with endless burpees, leg-locks, choke-holds, and — so I was told — bench-pressing three times his own weight.

The weed rub, his seven-grams-a-day smoking habit: All part of his routine to prepare for the big fight he had a few days later. He wanted to share the good news, so I wrote the story. He lost the fight.

A few months later, he called me out of the blue with a demand: Remove the story from the Internet. None of it was true. I'd gotten it all wrong. I hadn't — and I had the interview on tape to prove it — and soon enough it came out: He'd had trouble booking a fight ever since our talk, and he suspected that the interview wherein he extolled weed's power for an elite athlete was the reason.

He had a drug problem. And it's not just his.

Drugs are everywhere in sports. From the gym to the diamond, from high school to amateur softball to the Olympics, everyone, it seems, is on something: supplements and pain pills, deer antler dust and outright endocrine chemistry experiments.

There are a few things most can agree on: Steroids and performance-enhancing drugs are dangerous and bad (but very good for business). Transform your body using the right supplements, though, and you're good.

Some sports are slowly getting it right. Combat sports, which banned Northern California-bred UFC title contender Nicky Diaz several times because he liked to put marijuana in his body, have joined with the Olympics in increasing the amount of THC allowed in an athlete's blood by a factor of 10.

Major League Baseball is not. Baseball still no idea what to do, as evidenced by the spuriously sourced purge of the man once considered the greatest living player by sanctimonious, erratic fans.

The NFL, in many ways professional sports' most abusive and exploitative syndicate, is changing its ways. After condemning marijuana-smokers to perdition — get caught with pot and you were a "liability," with "off-field issues"; get addicted to painkillers, like Brett Favre, and you're a warrior who conquered his demons — the league last week budged and said that it might, in the future, allow players to use medical marijuana.

Giving players allowance for their legal rights is the least they can do, after smashing their bodies and brains to bits feeding the profit machine. That last weekend's pre-Super Bowl games were played in cities where cannabis is legal is surely a coincidence.

Yolo County, where California's best and brightest future farmers learn their trade, isn't a place celebrities frequent, though there's one former A-Lister who would love to be here. Maybe someday Lance Armstrong will be in the U.S. Bicycling Hall of Fame.



He did more than anyone else alive to get Americans excited about the Tour de France, including winning through doping and lying about it for close to 15 years.

Probably not. He is a pariah, and his LIVESTRONG bracelets are in landfills. Sports abhors a loser or a quitter, but sports hates a cheater that much more. That everyone cheated — or just the people who mattered — is irrelevant. As quickly as you became a legend, you will become a monster.

The question isn't whether drugs are good or bad. They are clearly both, often within a very short stretch of time. Athletes are on drugs, and will be. There is no stopping it, and often no finding it.

The question is whether sports — the athletes competing, the fans consuming, and the select few profiting off of it all — can start being honest with itself. Until then, an abusive relationship will continue.

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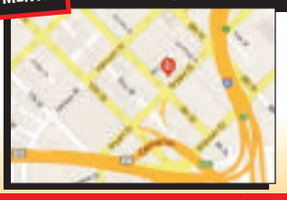
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The COMEDY ISSUE

Dissecting the joke to understand it better.

As someone who has remained passionate about all aspects of comedy and its evolution, I think SF Sketchfest is the place to be. The most interesting stuff I see in Los Angeles invariably ends up there, but then, as behooves a place like Baghdad by the Bay, you get a Chinese box of comedy when you come. Endless hidden surprises I never even knew existed. It's like that dream you have where the house you've lived in for 20 years has a room in it you didn't know about.

That's Laraine Newman, OG *SNL* cast member and Groundling founder, extolling the virtues of SF Sketchfest, which transforms the city into a Renaissance Fair of dick jokes for two weeks. Ms. Newman points out that "show business is just one big happy family," and so comedians tend to see Sketchfest as an opportunity to get together with other members of the tribe and have a good time outside the comedy grind, whatever that is. (Self-flagellation as self-medication?) We at *SF Weekly* explored this migration, one of nature's most special and mysterious, with our Comedy Issue. In the pages that follow, you'll find essays on San Francisco by some of the finest minds in the field today (plus our own contributions), as well as interviews that connect the folks working the stages and podcasts. In order to help you on your own journey of self-discovery, we have also put together a guide for you to navigate Sketchfest based on what species of comedy you might enjoy encountering in the wild.

"Your lungs will hurt," says Newman, who performs Feb. 8 and 10. "I guarantee it." In what other field is a promise of pain offered as a benefit? Well, certainly in San Francisco there are a couple of others, but at least for the next few weeks, we're all taking our licks together.

Brandon R. Reynolds

Go to SFWeekly.com for more ruminations on San Francisco from comedians Greg Behrendt, Janine Brito, and Moshe Kasher, plus a guide to Sketchfest music.





MOLDED BY SUFFERING

BY DANA GOULD



I was not born in San Fran- cisco, nor was I raised there. I moved to the city in the fall of 1986 and headed south before the '90s arrived.

But I consider San Francisco my home. I may not have grown up here, but I most certainly came of age here. But my contribution to its history, its comedy history anyway, has nothing to do with anything I've ever done or said on any of its stages. For I, along with my friend and fellow comedian, Alex Reid, founded The San Francisco Comedy Condo.

The 336, as it was known in its heyday, was at 336 21st Ave., a canary yellow, split-level duplex in the Richmond District, right down the street from The Video Café, a nifty name for a diner that rented "videos," the cumbersome, magnetic tape-based cassettes that were a popular method of watching movies before the Internet. Yes! There *was* such a time! A primitive, savage era, when winged reptiles ruled the sky and dick pix were painted on canvas and painstakingly taken door-to-door.

The 336 served two distinct purposes; first and foremost it housed comedians. Alex and I rented the flat in October 1986, and in comedians' hands it stayed, handed down, like a stucco yellow sword, from one group of comics to the next, for the next 19 years. In addition to the small army of stand-up comedians who called The 336 their home, the list of its guests was even more impressive. Margaret Cho, Janeane Garofalo, David Cross, Louis C.K., Zachery Bacik, and Casey Hardmeyer have all graced its many couches. I'm pretty sure Jon Stewart crashed there at least once.

But that was not the real purpose of The 336. The real purpose of The 336, based upon my extensive, first-hand experience, was to grow mold. It seemed to be specifically designed for it. I remain amazed — *amazed* — that the above list of comedians is not enshrined on a plaque somewhere, a sad remembrance of those lost to the Mysterious Comedian Plague.

The house is one of those strange little gems that dot the city: human domiciles designed specifically to deprive its inhabitants of sunlight, to withhold any degree of heat or comfort, and to keep moisture in the air at all costs. It was a building constructed under the false belief that human beings are at their most comfortable when they are at their clammiest, that the natural state of man is to shiver in a damp sweatshirt, scrawling jokes into a notebook while crouched on a futon, buried under blankets in a vain attempt to hide from air that felt like a corpse tongue.

The neighborhood itself, it must be admitted, was a willing co-conspirator. The Outer Richmond remains one of America's leading providers of seasonal affective disorder. I distinctly recall one particular drive back to the city after visiting friends in Los Angeles. For six hours, from the 101 and up the 5, then inland, over the bridge and back into the city, I drove under a brilliant, cloudless, azure sky. A pristine, brilliant blue gem of a sky that hung over the city all the way up to 19th Avenue, which I duly crossed and bade the sun farewell. A sad Walgreens signaled my entrance to this primordial, fog-shrouded world. A bleak gray canopy spat a dank breeze at the strange shapes that wandered through the mist, not a mile from life-giving sunshine, though it seemed doubtful these muttering, huddled figures, held so tightly in the neighborhood's environmental noose, could even conceive of it.

And somewhere, lost in that bog of concrete and stucco, a small nest of cynical hipsters made fun of their cold, moist hovel, secure in the knowledge that the bleaker their plight, the funnier they'd be when talking about it. Luxury and comfort rarely beget hilarity, which is why The 336 flourished, and I'm proud to have been a part of it.

Dana Gould is a writer and podcaster and ubiquitous funny guy. He appears a goodly number of times on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1. sfsketchfest.com/x/performers/dana-gould

LIFE ON THE UNDER-GROUND FAILROAD

BY IAN S. PORT

Sometimes, when you need to remember why you love San Francisco, it's helpful to visit a city where things *do* work. Recently I went to Hong Kong, another high-tech burg with too many people, too little space, and excellent dim sum. There, whooshing around on immaculate subways and regaling myself with the city's redundant transit options, I came to appreciate the most vibrant, humane, and absurd aspect of living in San Francisco.

The godforsaken Muni.

Yes, Muni is a decrepit network of shabby streetcars clattering through graffiti-sprayed tunnels, of trash-filled buses groaning their way up our steep hills (or at least trying to). To even catch a Muni train from downtown, you must first descend into a labyrinth of urine, feces, and amateur musicians.

But the Muni misery we endure is, I argue, what makes San Francisco great. Or at least what makes us whatever it is that we are, which often seems great. Ride our transit, and you will witness the hardiness and tolerance of the city dweller in her hostile home environment: evading the wrath of surly bus operators, fighting the urge to shush needlessly screaming passengers, maintaining a stoic outward appearance despite finding herself trapped in a metal can that reeks of stale Steel Reserve and fresh butt.

They do not have any of that in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, the cars of a subway train are connected with no doors, forming one clean, extended, unpartitioned corridor. Can you imagine such an arrangement here? Within five minutes, some park denizen would be rolling the length of the train on his skateboard, trumpeting profanities while soliciting cash for his daily bud. Or some punk kid would relieve himself into a Snapple bottle and start a train-length bowling game, with the bottle for the ball and some techie's $300 loafers for the pins. And if the young and semi-employed were not running through the train drunk and/or in their underwear — which is unlikely — they'd be Occupying it to keep designer chain stores off Valencia Street. So I'm sorry to say it, Hong Kong, but there's more to ur- » p14

ONLY IN ALAMEDA

BY EMILY HELLER

Like a lot of Bay Areans, when I'm traveling, I tell people I'm from San Francisco. I say this despite the fact that I was born and raised in a lovely old house in Alameda. My sweet mom gave birth in a goddamned house, with some combination of midwives, acupuncturists, psychics, artisans, and paralegals around. She gave birth in the house and then we just kept living there, like that wasn't totally gross.

I don't claim S.F. just for convenience — to give people I meet on airplanes a general idea of why I'm not wearing deodorant. It's useful for that, but I also really do feel as if the city is where I'm from. Alameda is close enough and boring enough to always be in San Francisco's shadow. I spent most of high school dreaming



of how cool my life would be once I finally lived in the city. I'd have such cool clothes and a cool apartment and my hair would just get better somehow and I would definitely know how to talk to boys and not be a virgin.

One out of five ain't bad! I found that out when I finally moved to San Francisco after college and lived here for three years, pursuing my dream of getting paid to be crude and tactless. Like a true sucker, I moved to New York in 2011 (boo!) and now I live in L.A. (double boo!), but I'll be back as soon as they build that bullet train so I can commute to Hollywood.

I'm excited to return to San Francisco to perform at Sketchfest this year, and I thought in anticipation I'd recap for you my most San Francisco-y moments from my time here. Here it is.

The Woz

I was hosting a show at the Punchline and Steve Wozniak (co-founder of Apple!) showed up. He was nice/bored enough to stick around afterward to chat people up and hand out his insanely cool, metal business cards. I still have mine. Google them to see what they look like. Is that treachery? To Google something about Steve Wozniak? Is there another, more Woz-y search engine you should use? Google that, too.

Honey's Not Vegan, Actually

I was devastated to find out that my favorite restaurant in San Francisco closed sometime since I left. Golden Era was one of many delicious vegan Vietnamese spots run by disciples of the "Supreme Master" Ching Hai. You could eat your tasty fake chicken while reading one of their pamphlets about immediate enlightenment or watching her 24-hour "good news" channel. One day I was having dinner and working out some jokes with the very funny Dave Thomason. Toward the end of our meal, an earthy woman in Tevas, on her way out of the restaurant, knocked on our table with her fist, looked me in the eye and said, "Get over yourself, honey." She was gone before I could sputter, "But I'm perfect!" I still have no idea what I said that got to her. I was workshopping my *Frasier* material. Maybe she's a *Cheers* girl?

Dog Fest

McKinley Elementary holds my favorite fundraiser every spring: Dog Fest. Everyone in the neighborhood brings their crazy-looking dog to the park to watch other dogs compete for things like best bark, best jump, and best costume. The last year I went was 2011, and it happened to be the year that Heklina performed a number dressed as Cruella deVille while a bunch of elementary school kids ran around her dressed as dalmatians. After the song ended ("Dog Days Are Over" by Florence and the Machine) I said aloud, for the first time ever, "Only in San Francisco."

Emily Heller does stand-up, and then sits down as a writer for Fox's Surviving Jack. *She performs Feb. 7-8. sfsketchfest.com/x/performers/emily-heller*





The Comedy Issue from p12

ban life than clean, smooth, open subway trains, even ones that hold lots of people and arrive on time every two minutes. We San Franciscans prefer randomness — not just abstractly knowing that anything can and will happen at any time, but making sure that it does so on our daily commute.

Perhaps the biggest thing Muni reveals about San Francisco, though, is our incredible tolerance for failure. They say failing is the key to success? Let's remember that the next time a broken door on the inbound L-Taraval holds up the entire city's ride to work. Or when the next bus driver ends his shift in the middle of a route and leaves 40 people stranded on a hilly street in a quiet neighborhood: We're on the way to success, folks. It's about four stops ahead. The next 21-Hayes will arrive in 17 minutes, unless it doesn't.

Yet this chaos is a blessing — one we mostly fail to appreciate. Increasingly, newcomers to our city are cheating themselves out of this great unwashed Muni adventure. They live here, or claim to, and yet never plop their ass down in those puke-orange seats, never discuss the epistemology of *The Little Mermaid* with a 50-year-old man sporting facial tattoos and a Mickey Mouse cap. You meet a lot of crazy people on the bus here, but the ones who never ride it are the craziest. They pay all that money to reside in this one-of-a-kind circus, and they don't even bother to visit the sideshow.

Ian S. Port is the Music Editor for SF Weekly.

A DIRTY AND POORLY LIT PLACE

BY JOE ESKENAZI

In the era before ubiquitous smartphone flashlights, objects lost on the floor of the 711 Club stayed lost. It was a watering hole as dank as it was dark, and the ordeal of locating misplaced effects at ground level in such a place transcended mere impracticality. Like children raised in a home with a vicious dog, we knew better than to reach down from the table.

Some things just aren't worth finding.

At sundown on a Friday, it didn't take much to satisfy us. God knows the 711 Club wasn't much. And we were satisfied.

The energy saved in finding a creative name for a bar at 711 Market St. was most likely expended on duct tape to hold the furniture together. Looks hardly mattered, since the interior was eternally shrouded in darkness. The last wisps of light sneaking nervously in from Market Street would reveal Mary Tyler Moore-era glitter dotting the stucco walls, and playing cards randomly affixed to the ceiling. But once the heavy wood double-doors slammed behind you, that was wiped away. All you could discern in this dungeon was the trio of morose, interchangeable, androgynous bartenders, each with blond locks as tightly curled as rotini, and outfitted in white V-neck shirts nearly gleaming in the darkness.

The 711 may or may not have stocked any beer other than Bitburger. But that's all anyone seemed to order. Perhaps the first person ever served there ordered a Bitburger and every patron thereafter followed suit. The overriding impulse was to keep transactions with the bartenders as brief as possible as, to a man (?), powerful waves of morose, interchangeable B.O. wafted off them.

So, I'll have what he's having. Bitburger it is.

But that was satisfactory enough. The grenade-like glasses were large, and the beer was inexpensive. Bitburg, incidentally, was the site of the German military cemetery in which President Ronald Reagan felt the need to leave a wreath for the departed Waffen-SS. Drink enough Bitburger and you'll tell this story. Every Friday. And we were satisfied.

The amenities at the 711 were limited. But, in the era before ubiquitous smartphones, all we had to do was interact with our fellow human beings and lose things on the floor. There was a Ms. Pac Man table that grew magically irresistible after three steins of Bitburger, suggesting that the concept of beer goggles is applicable even to women who get turned on by eating fruit and ghosts.

That's actually a sexier menu than the one offered to the morlocks inhabiting this darkened lair. Food options consisted of pretzels ... and more pretzels. But people ate them — maybe. Between blackness and Bitburger, it's impossible to recall a single fellow patron.

Obviously, this was all too good to last. One Friday, we showed up at the 711 and a large padlock was hanging from the double-doors. In the sliver between them, we could make out, for the first time, the illuminated interior of the bar. It was like spotting your mother in a stag film. It was something no one ever needed to see.

The 711 was, without irony, converted into a 7-Eleven. They actually turn on the lights now. The employees bathe and make human expressions. There's a large freezer where Ms. Pac Man once held court, and pretzels now run 99 cents a pack. It's everything one could hope for in a 7-Eleven experience.

The bar that once stood here was a place neither great nor terrible in a city where things increasingly tend toward one extreme or the other. It was a memorable place to forget. It was uninviting but you couldn't stay away. Then it was gone.

Joe Eskenazi is a Staff Writer for SF Weekly.

THE HIGH PRICE OF UNDERWEAR

BY RACHEL SWAN

San Franciscans have always loved playing dress-up. These days, we borrow all our hot items from a city 5,000 miles to the west. Our Target stores sell Harajuku dresses; our Twitter employees walk around with yoga mats slung over their shoulders. Our latest housing trend — the micro-apartment — is a spinoff of Tokyo architecture.

So it almost goes without saying that no business better embodies San Francisco culture than a four-story Japanese department store in Union Square, whose ad campaigns feature tech CEOs preening alongside jazz musicians, and whose puffy jackets dominated the landscape for a few disorienting months. The store's name — Uniqlo — is a portmanteau of the word "unique" and a Spanish pronoun, so borderline unpronounceable that you'd think an umlaut fell off the billboard. But it's also a fully formed brand identity — a word that screams "pedestrian" and "aspirational" at the same

THROUGH THE PEEPING GLASS

BY DAVE HILL

Like most non-natives, I came to know the city of San Francisco via the early '80s Ted Knight vehicle *Too Close for Comfort*. And I came to love San Francisco thanks to its close ties to the Church of Satan. My travels bring me here a couple of times a year and I love it more and more with each visit. It's a city that fills me with wonder at every turn, partly because of its rich and varied history, but also because it's a town that doesn't skimp on drifters.

A few years ago after one of my Sketchfest shows, I met a friend and her girlfriend at a bar for a few drinks. As it turned out, the girlfriend worked at a place called the Lusty Lady, which she explained was just a few blocks away and also had naked ladies. I finished my drink and also my friend's drink and my friend's girlfriend's drink as quickly as possible and we headed over.

Like most guys who tell stories about going to strip joints, I'd like to preface the following by stating that I'm not normally a strip joint kind of guy. That said, I fully admit to being totally into naked ladies. I was just looking at some on the Internet earlier today and it was awesome. Also, it turned out the Lusty Lady wasn't really a strip joint, but a peep show, which is different. Even better, it was "the world's only unionized worker-owned peep show co-op." As both a feminist and supporter of unions, I was excited to check out some boobs with a couple of total lesbians.

Since my friend's girlfriend worked there, everyone at the



place was really friendly to us when we walked in. A bald guy wearing a track suit that suggested he was probably in charge even escorted us to a private booth. My friend's girlfriend said the booths were normally very clean so she was embarrassed that the glass between us and the naked ladies was a little cloudier than normal. Still, I didn't want to let that ruin our good time, so I made a mental note to burn my clothes later and settled in for the show.

It turned out my friend's girlfriend knew both naked ladies on the other side of the glass, so in between showing us their naked parts they made small talk that helped me relax, which I really appreciated. Since they were already totally naked, though, it didn't take long for us to see everything, so after a few minutes, we decided to check out the rest of the place, including another room where one of my friend's girlfriend's friends waved at us with a giant purple dildo, which I got a real kick out of.

Our tour complete, we decided to head for the exit where the bald guy in the track suit was brushing his teeth.

"Long night at work," I thought. "Gotta stay fresh."

As I walked past him, the bald guy in the track suit offered me a handshake. I was about to accept it when I noticed what appeared to be a frothy mix of toothpaste and saliva dripping down his palm.

"No, thanks," I told him. He was a little offended, but I've got limits.

"Your boss is a bit strange," I told my friend's girlfriend once we got outside.

"I've never seen that guy in my whole life," she answered.

I was disappointed to hear the Lusty Lady shut its doors this past fall. I hope the bald guy in the track suit is all right. He seemed really great.

Dave Hill is a N.Y.-based comedian and musician who also writes for publications (ahem) and has shows Feb. 6-8. sfsketchfest.com/x/performers/dave-hill

time. Say it fast and it sounds like you're saying the word "unicorn."

Maybe it's no accident that the Union Square store rose from the ashes of Designer Shoe Warehouse, which has since migrated up the hill. What used to be the realm of cut-rate Stacy Adams shoes and high-energy, hoarding Italian tourists is now an endless warren of pastel sweaters, cotton broadcloths, Breton stripes, ultra-stretch jeans, and mannequins encased in glass. Watered-down house music wafts from the stereo speakers. The clerk wears a jacket inspired by a kimono.

In other words, it's a store for the discerning San Francisco shopper — a place where 49ers tight end Vernon Davis could reconcile his appreciation for fashionable scarves with his desire to still be a dude.

A store with a more banal name couldn't get away with selling a whole line of Minnie Mouse sweatshirts and describing them as "casual chic." Or turning Tumblr founder David Karp into a centerfold. Or using "slim" as an adjective to characterize most of its men's apparel. If Uniqlo had the exact same pedigree and a name like "H&M," it probably wouldn't take the liberty of disrupting the underwear industry.

And yet it did so, boldly. When Uniqlo opened a second retail store in Stonestown Galleria Mall, San Franciscans queued up behind a velvet rope well before the 10 a.m. bell toll. "Hell officially froze over and Armageddon has arrived, for clearly why else would I tolerate waiting in line to get into this store?" a disgruntled Yelp reviewer demanded, admitting, later, that he couldn't resist the promise of Uniqlo HEATTECH thermal underwear (which uses special "heat-retaining" technology to make insulation out of body moisture, and currently goes for $19.90 a pair.) Sadly, the store didn't carry his size.

But Stonestown's Uniqlo doesn't have quite the cachet of its Union Square counterpart, even if it re-purposes the same floor plan, the same geometric Oxford shirts, and the same emoji-inspired color wheel. Maybe Uniqlo is just better experienced in the downtown corridor, within spitting distance of the city's historical cable cars. It's a place where "old San Francisco" can finally meet "new Tokyo" — and where $19.90 seems like a perfectly reasonable price for underwear.

Rachel Swan is a Staff Writer for SF Weekly.

SOME THOUGHTS ON PROGRESS FROM THE FIRE HYDRANT AT 20TH AND CHURCH

BY BRANDON R. REYNOLDS

Well what the fuck now.

Ever since you killed winter, it's never quiet. Now the sun's always out and all you fancy-ass kids lie scattered all over Dolores Park like the wreck of the hipster fucking Hindenburg. Does anyone work anymore? Is the American economy powered entirely by tweezed eyebrows? Progress is as dynamic as goddamn fruit salad.

What? What did I ever do, you ask? How about I saved the Mission, motherfucker.

Don't believe me? Where the fuck were you on the morning of 18 April, nineteen-aught-six? I know where I was. My ass was perched up top of Dolores Park while the whole goddamned city fell the fuck apart, then blew the fuck up. I was the fireplug that *didn't* run dry. I was the one the firefighters came a-running to, on horses and shit, and saved the goddamned Mission from burning the fuck down.

My cup? My motherfucking cup runneth *over*.

So yes, you can sprawl all over the sweet-ass hill and call up apps on your phone all day while you get too high on that old-shoe-smelling bastard's edibles. But you got an app better than *water*? Hell no.

After the earthquake, you know what they did? They painted my ass *gold*. Yes sir. And every year, the fire chief wakes his ass up on April 18th and moseys on out at 5:12 in the goddamn morning to slap a new coat of paint on



me while a small herd of boosters and cub-ass reporters with nothing better to do stand by. Getting painted gold by the *fire chief*? That's like getting a handjob from the Homecoming King every year on your birthday, for a fire hydrant.

Listen, there's nothing wrong with all the zippies and twinksters and shazams and bunnymen who live large in the city now. Not like I don't enjoy to see people tangled up in lightness and motherfucking mirth, but this is Elysian *fields* shit. This is Caligula's *brunch*, yo.

After the earthquake, there were people living in tents in the park because they had no houses. That was some re-fu-GEE shit.

Now anybody puts up something in the park, it's one of those tightropes, like the world needs more specialized balancers. That's some fu-NAM-bu-list shit.

Mission folk used to be hard, man. That's how life was. Now, shit, I don't »p16



The Comedy Issue from p15

even *know*. I see some motherfuckers, I *know* they wax their balls. Seems to me like every generation gets a little softer as they get further and further away from an appreciation of total catastrophe. And then all these kombucha-ass zippies fucking hit Yelp when the next Big One comes down the line and they wig because they can't make a brunch reservation. Only there's no Yelp anymore. Just a big-ass hole, and people down in it going "Yelp."

You know arugula is also called *rocket*? I know that shit now. I don't want to know that shit. We don't need two words for that. That's noise. Everything should be lettuce and everybody's eyes should be on the goddamn horizon.

But that's just me, man. I have seen the shit, right here. I have opened wide and given of myself and I have held the chaos at bay, for just a little motherfucking longer. And the motherfuckers that *know*, know. And every year they come around, warming up that wrist.

All that's gold don't glitter, bitch! Sometimes it just sits there with a quiet strength, ready to save your motherfucking world from the next motherfucking apocalypse.

Brandon R. Reynolds is the Editor of SF Weekly.

PHALLUSY

Tenacious D's Jack Black and Kyle Gass on Van Halen, fiery hoops, and theater-sized dick jokes.

BY DAVE PEHLING

When it comes to mixing rock and comedy, self-proclaimed "greatest band on Earth" Tenacious D occupies the same rarified stratum as Frank Zappa and Spinal Tap. For 20 years, Jack Black and Kyle Gass have been belting out hilariously vulgar acoustic anthems that seamlessly match Dio-era Black Sabbath bombast with Simon and Garfunkel-style harmonies.

Building on the modest success of their late-'90s cult HBO series (a template that Kiwi duo Flight of the Conchords later followed to global fame), the D grew from sold-out club tours to become a major concert attraction and festival favorite. Though an extended break from recording followed the pair's weed-hazed cinematic origin story *Tenacious D in The Pick of Destiny*, they re-emerged victorious in 2012 with *Rize of the Fenix*, another collection of hysterical epics featuring possibly the most preposterously phallic cover art known to man.

Black and Gass spoke of recent triumphs ahead of SF Sketchfest's opening night tribute to the D at the Castro, which reunites the duo with HBO series cast member Paul F. Thompkins for an evening of clips, conversation, and song.

SF Weekly: **The *Rize of the Fenix* tour was the most visually spectacular Tenacious D show I've seen so far. The Stones may have introduced the giant inflatable phallus to the rock stage, but you went several better with one that climaxed confetti all over the audience at the end of the show and transformed into a vagina that you two popped out of for the acoustic encore. Did you have a hand in the design?**

Kyle Gass: A lot of credit goes to our lighting guy, Dan Hadley. But yeah, that was our doing, for sure.

The set was so over-the-top when I saw you at the Fox in Oakland; it seemed perfect for larger outdoor venues or festivals.

Jack Black: Sometimes the head of the phoenix would smush up against the ceiling of the venue. Because our phoenix is incredibly large, and sometimes it gets too tight!

Last year, *Rize of the Fenix* got nominated for a Best Comedy Album Grammy, and you won the Revolver Golden Gods Award for Comeback of the Year. How much did it mean to you to get that kind of recognition?

KG: Well, I think awards are pretty meaningless. They're fun. I was excited to be nominated for the Grammy, but prizes are a little strange.

JB: I thought our album was the best album of the year. Forget comedy album. I was a little insulted that we only got recognition for comedy album. Really? There were five better rock albums? Which ones? Bullshit! So I was a little bitter about the whole thing. We ended up losing to... who cares? The Golden Gods was a sweet honor, although we have to confess it seemed like whoever showed won the Golden God Award. We beat Aerosmith and we beat Van Halen, but I think if Van Halen shows up, they fuckin' win!

KG: Wait, we beat Van Halen? We shouldn't be able to beat Van Halen at anything. They should automatically win that, I think. [Note: Van Halen wasn't actually nominated.]

JB: On the Grammys, I'm saying bullshit. We lost to Jimmy Fallon. His album was just songs they did on his TV show. They didn't even re-record them in the studio. They just put them on a record. And then they won because — I'm convinced — that all the voters didn't even listen to any of the albums.

KG: No, I agree. I don't think they listen.

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Kyle Gass and Jack Black

JB: This is what I'd do. I'm not saying all the voters are dicks, but the way it's set up, it's like you get your fucking ballot, you look at it, and you go, "Hey, who's on the ballot? Oh, Jimmy Fallon! I like his show. I saw Larry Buttafuoco on there. [sic? Joey Buttafuoco?] It was funny! I'm voting for Jimmy Fallon." They're not listening to the records. This whole interview has gone into a very bitter place.

It seems there has been a real renaissance in artists mixing comedy and music since Tenacious D first rose to fame. Do you think your success has led more comedians and comedic actors to explore music?

JB: We can't take that. We didn't start the fire! If you want to give someone the real credit, you go with Spinal Tap, of course. We definitely took the guitar and ran with it from there. Did we maybe keep the flames a-burning so that the Flight of the Conchords could come later and rule the world? Yeah!

KG: Well, they're not really rock per se. They're folky.

JB: But should we take credit for the comedy music renaissance? I'm going to take that! We already know who the competition is. There's Flight of the Conchords, there's Spinal Tap, and there's everyone we had at Festival Supreme [a comedy festival the duo held last October]. You can also include homeboys from *South Park*, Matt [Stone] and Trey [Parker].

Have you been the subject of the kind of tribute you're receiving at the Castro Theatre for Sketchfest before? What can fans expect?

JB: It'll probably be like the Kennedy Center Honors, where we'll sit there and get lauded. And then we'll have to play some songs to prove that we deserve the honor. It won't be the first time we've had to jump through a fiery hoop.

So what are the D's future plans? Are there more film projects or another album in the works?

JB: Yeah we've got another album coming soon. Look for it in 2015. And we've got an animated show that will be on the Internet extremely soon. I think we should circle 2015 for the big unveiling of the next Tenacious D project.

KG: Put that down. Call the calendar people.

JB: Tell all the other artists they might want to take that year off, because no one is going to be interested in anything else.

Tenacious D

9:30 p.m. Thusday, Jan. 23, at the Castro Theatre. Advance tickets sold out; sfsketchfest.com.

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THE ILLUMINATI OF MIRTH

Comedy is a small world. Here we establish but a few secret connections.

BY EMILIE MUTERT



NATE BARGATZE

Southerner-turned-Los Angeleno and Sketchfest first-timer Nate Bargatze's comedy style has been referred to as "low-key," but in person, some say, he can be "excitable." He's performing this year at several events, including Kurt Tub, Crash Test, and Prompter, which is a spur-of-the-moment type improvisational comedy show that makes Bargatze feel as nervous as he used to feel performing as a young stand-up.

***SF Weekly*: How do you expect this to compare to other comedy festivals?**

Nate Bargatze: I'm excited. I've heard nothing but good things, and festivals are a lot of fun. You get to see a lot of comics you don't get to see a ton throughout the year. The shows are always fun. The people are there to specifically to see the show, instead of sometimes, being at a club, it's just people are just there, they go out for whatever reason.

Some people say it's like going to camp.

It's nothing but fun.

What do you like to do when you visit San Francisco?

I was there just recently. It's pretty awesome just to walk around and stuff. I lived in New York for a while, so it's fun to go walk around.

When and how did you first know you were funny?

I knew I was funny growing up. In high school I was always making people laugh. I guess right about then. I was thinking about doing comedy, but nothing too crazy. I wasn't going to start yet, I just would joke about going to the comedy club, and people would say, you should go try it. When I was 23, I moved with a buddy of mine to Chicago, and I started then. I really was like, "Finally, I'm going to do it."

What made you want to pursue it as a career?

It's just working out. Once you get in it, it's awesome, and once you start, it's very addictive. I just love doing comedy so much, and being around comics. Comics are the funnest people to be around. It's awesome to make people laugh. It's such a thrill when you get a new joke that works good. So you know, it's a weird career, you just hope you can make it a career. It's not something that is guaranteed to be a career. It's almost like you feel like you're getting away with something by making it a career.

Does it bother you when people ask where you're from, because of your accent?

No.

Where are you from?

I'm from Nashville.

What's different about comedy crowds in the South from crowds on the coasts? Are you received differently?

There's a difference. Maybe in Nashville, it's like, people can laugh at stuff differently. Just because it's maybe that they have the same mindset as I do. Versus someone else, if you're talking about the South and you're not in the South, they don't know what it's like. But, I was just in San Francisco, and I loved it. And so many people move there, people are from all over there, so it's great because you kind of get everybody. People from every place, laughing.

You're doing a number of different shows at this year's Sketchfest. Which one would be the best one to take a first date?

The Crash Test show is going to be stand-up. The others, I think I'm doing that Prompter show, and it's like Set List, and Set List is one of the funnest shows I've ever done. It's the same feeling as when I first started doing comedy. You're making it up on the spot, on your own, it's the most nerve-racking feeling, and when I'm about to do it I feel like, I don't want to do this. And then you just do it and hope it works out. So, I think Crash Test is like if you want to see my stand-up, and then the other shows, they're just a lot of fun to do.

I talked to Ron Funches; do you know him?

I'm a big fan. I think Ron Funches is great. He's a super nice dude, and he's very easy to root for, because he's such a genuine guy and a great guy to be around. And he's just a really funny dude.

Nate Bargatze

performs Feb. 7 and 8 at various venues for SF Sketchfest; sfsketchfest.com/x/performers/nate-bargatze.



RON FUNCHES

Stand-up performer, television actor, and comedy writer Ron Funches has been called "a super nice dude" and "a really funny dude." You can get a taste of his comedy writings on the *Kroll Show* on Comedy Central, but you haven't fully experienced the Ron Funches experience until you've heard him speak aloud, his airy voice transforming each joke into a whimsical cartoon melody. This will be Funches' third year at Sketchfest, and there are at least three opportunities to catch him perform.

***SF Weekly*: How does Sketchfest compare to other comedy festivals?**

Ron Funches: I've been to Just For Laughs in Montreal, [and] Bridgetown in Portland. Sketchfest is a nice balance between a comics-hanging-out party, like Bridgetown, and Just For Laughs is very corporate-y, and Sketchfest is just right in the middle. There are a lot of great shows spread out over some weeks, and you get to hang out with some friends that you don't normally see, and see some really famous people that you like, like Amy Poehler. I like that. I saw her last time I was there.

What do you like to do when you come to San Francisco?

I like to hang out with my friends. I used to live in Portland and came down to San Francisco quite a bit. I have a lot of friends there, and I enjoy hanging out. And I enjoy your delicious edibles, and food, that you have. I like to hang out around the Punchline and have a good time, eat a lot of pizza and play video games.

How did you get started in comedy, or if you prefer to answer a slightly different question, how and when did you first know you were funny?

Thank you for giving me an option. I think I first knew I was funny when I was probably 12 or 13. I was very shy. I kind of developed this odd sense of humor, and I'd make fun of my family members. And I wouldn't get in trouble for it; they liked it. They thought it was funny. So that was when I first thought, oh, I was me, and I was unique to people.

You're doing a number of different shows at this year's Sketchfest. Which one would be the best one to take a first date?

It depends on what you're trying to get out of the date. If you're really interested in her or him, and want to get to know her, or him, then maybe you'll want to go to the Slipnutz reunion show. There's going to be a lot of weird sketches, you'll able to judge your date's intelligence, and whether or not they like quirky humor. I think that's very important to know. But, if you just want to hook up with him or her, then maybe you want to take them to the Erotic Fan Fiction show and see if they're into having sex with robots or Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

For Erotic Fan Fic, are you a regular writer of fan fic or are you preparing something special for the show?

I don't think I've written much. I will definitely pull something out for the show though, I've got a vast knowledge of cartoon characters and fictional people I wish I could have sex with.

You have made the observation before that the *Muppet Babies* theme song is somewhat disturbing. Have you ever thought about how the Muppets had babies in the first place?

Miss Piggy was always very rambunctious. But in real life, I am aware that *Muppet Babies* was the prequel, so that wouldn't be right.

I guess it's important to respect the canon. What else are you working on currently?

I'm a writer and performer on the *Kroll Show*. I'm also a character on a show called *Undateable*, which comes out sometime in February.

What do you think about your fellow comedian Jenny Slate?

I know Jenny. I worked with her on the *Kroll Show*. She was probably the most intimidatingly impressive person I've ever worked with, as far as acting and improv-ing on anything. It was a pleasure to watch her work. She's amazing. I think she's one of the hilarious people out today, and she's just great. I can't say anything but glowing praise about Jenny Slate. I don't know much about where she came from. I feel like she has this theater background, and I want to know how she's like this cool pot-smokin' chill girl that also seems like she might possibly be rich. I don't know how she has every cool trait.

Ron Funches

performs Jan. 31 and Feb. 1 at various venues for SF Sketchfest; sfsketchfest.com/x/performers/ron-funches.



JENNY SLATE

Jenny Slate has been called "chill" and "seems like she might possibly be rich." She's also a trained and talented comedian and actress with a lot of love for the craft and her peers. She's never been to Sketchfest before, and this year you can catch her performing stand-up as host of the Big Terrific show and for Jenny Slate and Friends. You may have seen her on the TV box before, playing characters on *House of Lies*, *Parks and Recreation*, *Kroll Show*, and even once on a little-known HBO show called *Girls*.

***SF Weekly:* How do you expect Sketchfest to compare to other comedy fests?**

Jenny Slate: Usually I do three to five festivals per year, a lot of them in Austin. San Francisco is such a beautiful unique city, and the people are so up for anything, so that will be one of the highlights for me. That and the delicious food.

What do you like to do in San Francisco?

What's that big beautiful park? It has a fancy name. The Presidio? Because I miss walking so much, I'm a New Yorker, and I miss walking everywhere. So when I go to San Francisco I really enjoy busting my buns on the hills. Great hills. The city's so vibrant. My sister just moved from Noe Valley, so I got a good local tour for many years. And I like getting over to Berkeley. I want to eat at Chez Panisse.

How did you start in comedy, or if you'd prefer to answer a slightly different question, when and how did you first know you were funny?

I got my start technically in college. I joined the improv group at Columbia University during my undergrad. I knew what improv was, I had never done it, and it was really, really fun. And that's also where I met most of my best friends, and my comedy partner Gabe Liedman, I met him there. When we graduated, we started doing stand-up together.

You're doing a number of different shows at this year's Sketchfest. Which one would be the best one to take a first date?

Oh, hmm. There's not going to be a difference in format really. The one on Saturday is called Big Terrific because it is a version of the show that Gabe Liedman, Max Silvestri, and I all started together. Both shows I'm hosting. They're all just stand-up shows. Maybe Saturday's the best one to bring a date to, because it's always nice to be around people who love each other. And Gabe and I and Max, we're close friends for forever, and Max lives in New York, and there's a lot of fun, playful energy in the air. And the shows we do at Big Terrific are all focused on making people laugh, not making fun of people. Your date won't get made fun of. That's not my style.

People might recognize you from *Parks & Recreation* on which you play a character Mona-Lisa. Have you seen the real Mona Lisa, the painting in France?

I have seen it. And like many people say, it's a lot smaller than you'd think.

What do you think she is smiling about?

I mean, I'm a comedian. I don't know.

Is there anything else you'd like to plug? What else are you working on?

Right now I have two television shows that are airing. You can see me on the *Kroll Show* on Comedy Central, and I'm also on *House of Lies* on Showtime. We had our first episode of that last Sunday.

What do you know about Kurt Braunohler?

I know Kurt, he's a dear friend of mine, he lives down the street from me. I think that he's incredibly hilarious, very unique, and beautiful inside and out. That's what I think. I love him. I love seeing him perform. I just did a show with him last Monday, he hosts a great show in L.A. with Kristen Schaal called Hot Tub. One of the things that most people expect from Kurt is something that's very high-energy and highly creative, maybe even a bit experimental, and new. Which is a great thing to do in comedy.

Jenny Slate
performs Jan. 24 and 25 at various venues for SF Sketchfest; sfsketchfest.com/x/performers/jenny-slate.



KURT BRAUN-OHLER

A veteran of Upright Citizens Brigade theater in New York, Kurt Braunohler's been in the comedy game since the '90s, in which time he's cultivated a reputation as a comic who's "hilarious, very unique, and beautiful inside and out." He's also not afraid of experimentation, creating high-energy, one-of-a-kind shows and performances. He's been to Sketchfest like a million (four) times before, and this year he's bringing his own podcast, The K Ohle, and his own stand-up showcase, Kurt Tub.

***SF Weekly:* How does Sketchfest compare to other festivals in which you've participated?**

Kurt Braunohler: It's a really nice party. You get to see everybody you haven't seen in a long time, and it's like everybody in comedy is there for one of the weekends. Everybody's there, it's great.

What do you like to do when you come up to San Francisco?

I like to go up on top of that tower — what's it called?

Coit Tower?

Yes, the Coit Tower. I always go to the top of there and just look at everybody. And walk along the water usually.

How did you get your start in comedy, or if you'd prefer to answer a slightly different question, when and how did you first know you were funny?

I got my start in the late '90s in New York City, I started improvising at the Upright Citizens Brigade theater. Then I just did improv for a long time, and I did not start doing stand-up until seven or eight years ago. I just wish I had started stand-up earlier.

Why is that?

I like stand-up so much better than anything else. I wish I had it in my life before.

You're doing a number of different shows at this year's Sketchfest. Which one would be the best one to take a first date?

Oooooh. I think probably Kurt Tub. If you take a date out to my podcast taping, which is at 1 p.m., you're probably a youth pastor. Or you're a horrible alcoholic.

Your stand-up show is called Kurt Tub. In what ways is the show similar to a hot tub?

It's bubbling with fun, it's so hot with talent, it's wet with possibility. And it only fits five people.

Is there anything else you want to plug?

You can pick up my album, which just came out recently, *How Did I Land?*

Is that your first stand-up album?

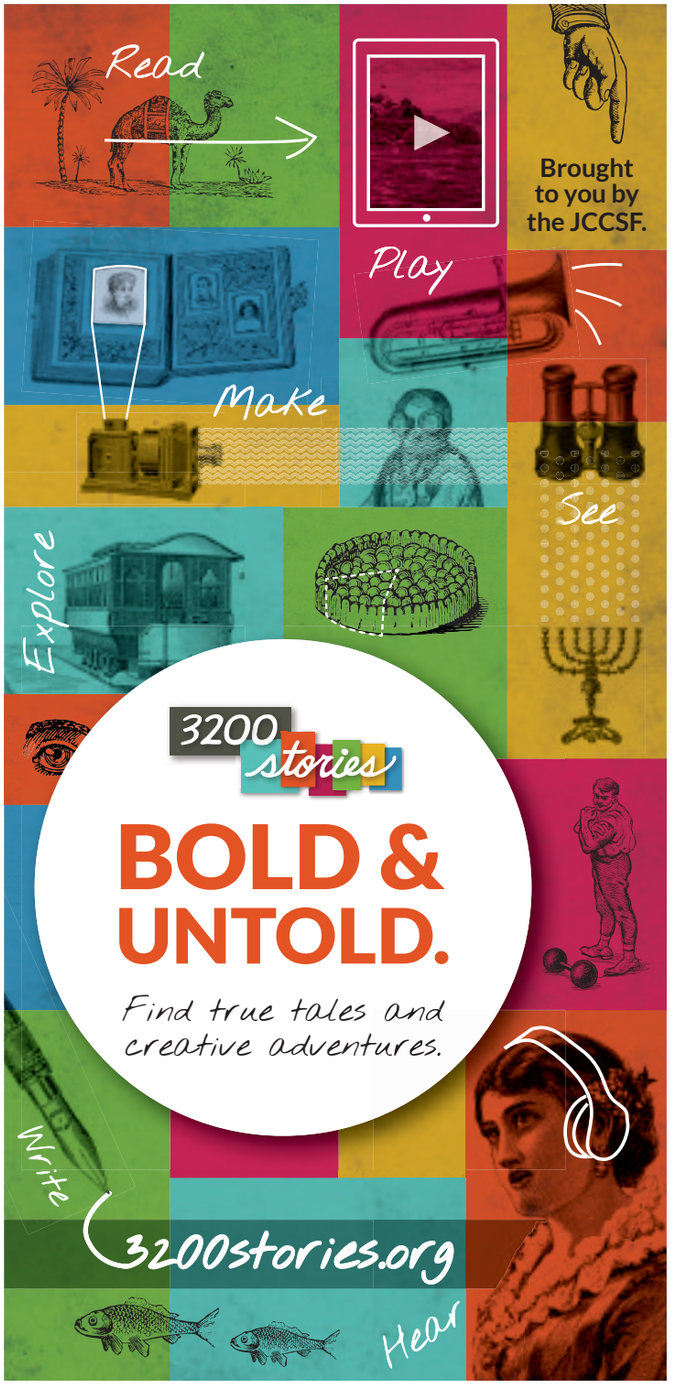
It's my first. It's on the Kill Rock Stars label.

I'm interviewing Nate Bargatze. Do you know him?

I know Nate. He'll actually be on Kurt Tub. I love Nate. I think he's really funny. And he's very low-key, but in person I find him to be very excitable.

Kurt Braunohler
performs Feb. 7 and 8 at various venues for SF Sketchfest; sfsketchfest.com/x/schedule.





WHAT MAKES YOU LAUGH?

How to decide what kind of shows you should see during SF Sketchfest.

BY EMILIE MUTERT


Maya Rudolph and Gretchen Lieberum as Princess

This is a definitively non-definitive guide to the three weeks of Sketchfest. Problematically, on most nights, there are too many events — too many events with the potential to be good, funny, and one-of-a-kind — to recommend one over another. With that in mind, here are some vague guidelines for those of you who find yourself entirely overwhelmed at this all-you-can-eat 24/7 Vegas-style buffet of comedy. For more info, go to sfsketchfest.com.

You: You've never listened to a comedy podcast, but you're a pretty open-minded person, and your ears work pretty good, and you noticed there are a lot of podcast recordings on the Sketchfest schedule, so you're like: maybe.

What you should know: A live podcast recording will basically be a comedy show in the form of a conversation. Hosts and guests will be seated, possibly standing, perhaps lying prone. The show will be recorded, meaning you'll be able to download it later and listen in the background for the sound of your own laughter, you disgusting egomaniac.

What should you see? The **Superego** podcast (Jan. 25) has been bringing the absurdity via its improv-with-clever-editing format for years, and the **Dead Authors** podcast (Jan. 24), hosted by Paul F. Tompkins as H.G. Wells, features twisted impersonations of your favorite literary figures and hypothetical conversations you only wish you'd gotten to hear in real life. Fans of *Community* won't want to miss **Harmontown** with creator Dan Harmon and Jeff F. Davis (Feb. 6). Also try **Improv4Humans**, another improvised character-driven podcast from *Upright Citizens Brigade* founder Matt Besser, featuring a roster of guests (Feb. 9).

You: You prefer music with a comedic approach, or perhaps an old-fashioned music-plus-comedy variety show, a modern-day Vaudevillian romp.

What you should know: There is a lot to choose from at this year's Sketchfest; many of these comedians have more than one talent.

What should you see? Megan Mullally's band **Nancy and Beth** does original songs and is old-timey sexy (Jan. 31). **Princess** featuring *SNL*'s Maya Rudolph is also sexy and is also a Prince cover band (Feb. 9); check them out on the YouTubes before you buy tickets if you need to convince yourself to go. **Heidecker & Wood** (Jan. 24) features Tim Heidecker and is soft-rock for comedy geeks, which is an overly specific-sounding intersection of people's interests that actually exists. Rhett Miller of the Old 97s is hosting an old-fashioned variety show, **Wheels Off,** at Yoshi's that features comedy and music and sounds very cool and is a great Monday night social opportunity (Jan. 27). **Thrilling Adventure Hour** is a live riff on radio shows of yore, featuring stories, sketch comedy, and music (Jan. 25).

You: You are not sure but you think you like this "anti-comedy" you've heard people talking about, this kind of comedy that doesn't go for easy beats and instead leans heavily on randomness, absurdity, being intentionally off-putting or vulgar, and generally giving in to chaos whenever possible.

What you should know: You might not, actually.

What should you see? Try anything featuring **Tim Heidecker**, perhaps him with **Neil Hamburger** (Jan. 25). Or try the **Gelmania** podcast with Brett Gelman (Jan. 24). Some of **Eric Andre**'s performances fall into this category as well, perhaps.

You: You don't just want *jokes*, you want *stories*. You want exposition, rising action, climax, *denouement*, thankyouverymuch.

What you should know: There is a fair amount of overlap between stand-up comedy and storytelling series. See any stand-up show, and if it's worth its salt, you will certainly hear some well-crafted stories.

What should you see? *RISK!* with Kevin Allison from *The State* (Jan. 31). Also **Mortified**, wherein people tell their most shameful tales of youth (Jan. 28); **Porchlight**, with an emphasis on the literary (Jan. 26); or **Competitive Erotic Fan Fiction**, which God help you should be self-explanatory (Jan. 31)

You: Not to brag but you listen to a lot of public radio.

What you should know: That's cool but you don't have to be such a snob about it.

What should you see? Wits with John Moe, a funny (as opposed to simply humorous) public-radio variety show (Jan. 24), or NPR's ***Ask Me Another*** game show (Feb. 5)

You: You were of a certain age during the 1990s and as a result you have a weird kind of emotional attachment to cast members from either *The State* or *Kids in the Hall*.

What you should know: No one is judging you for that.

What should you see? For your *State* fix, there's **Stella & Friends** with Michael Ian Black, Michael Showalter, and David Wain (Jan. 31); **Topics,** with Black and Showalter (Feb. 1); **Wainy Days Live,** featuring all three of the above (Feb. 1); and the aforementioned *RISK!* with Kevin Allison. For fans of *KITH*, there's a **Kevin McDonald Improv and Sketch Workshop** (Jan. 25); plus Dave Foley and McDonald perform together (Jan. 24).

You: You're curious about how small your favorite television personalities actually look in person.

What you should know: They're probably mostly smaller than you thought.

What should you see? Adam Scott (from *Parks and Recreation*, *Party Down*, and more) has a variety show, **The Greatest Event in Festival History,** based on his television special (Feb. 1). Comedians who have performances galore include **Jenny Slate** (read her interview on page 18), who you may know from TV's *House of Lies*, *Kroll Show*, or *Parks and Recreation,* and *Veep*'s **Matt Walsh**. *Thrilling Adventure Hour* features Paget Brewster, former Bay Arean and current star of *Criminal Minds*. See Conan O'Brien's friend **Andy Richter** at the Slipnutz reunion show (Feb. 1) and at Team Coco Live! (Feb. 1). **Becoming *'Enlightened'*** features the entire cast of HBO's gone-too-soon drama; that means Laura Dern, Luke Wilson, Sarah Burns, Jason Mantzoukas, and creator Mike White (Feb. 2). And if you want more than one canceled HBO show cast reunion, there's ***Bored to Death*** with creator Jonathan Ames and stars Ted Danson, Zach Galifianakis, and Jason Schwartzman (Feb. 1)

You: You are a cult movie fanatic.

What you should know: It's a little weird that you just like cult movies as a general category, usually people just have maybe one, two, a few, to which they're particularly attached. But again, no judgment.

What should you see? Alan Arkin is coming as part of the celebration of the anniversary of ***The In-Laws***, in which he gave what some consider the greatest comedic movie performance ever (Feb. 6). The cast of ***Napoleon Dynamite*** is doing a thing on opening night (Jan. 23), along with **Tenacious D** (read the interview on page 16). Cult-movie cast reunions abound this year, including but not limited to: ***Top Secret!*** (Feb. 8), ***Cabin Boy*** (Feb. 7), ***Super Troopers*** (Feb. 1), and ***Revenge of the Nerds*** (Feb. 8, read more on page 30).

You: You enjoy cartoons the most.

What you should know: Cartoons are not just for children and emotionally-stunted men-children; they are also for emotionally stunted women-children, and also for everyone else.

What should you see? There's the **Farewell *Futurama*!** panel featuring Billy West, the voice of Fry, Zoidberg, and more (Jan. 25). There's an **Afternoon with [brilliant yet underwatched] *The Venture Bros*** (Jan. 26). And, there's **Talkin' Toons,** a podcast by Rob Paulsen, famous voice actor behind characters Pinky and the Brain, Arthur from *The Tick*, Raphael from *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, and more (Jan. 26).

You: Comedy isn't really nerdy enough for you, but if there's some way comedy could be combined with your other interests like science, sound effects, or *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, now you're listening!

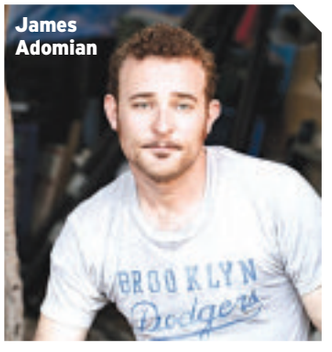
What you should know: You're in luck, nerd!

What should you see? StarTalk Live with Bill Nye (the science guy) and Eugene Mirman (Jan. 24), **SF Sketchfest Comedy NightLife** at the California Academy of Sciences (Jan. 30), Michael Winslow & Rhys Darby's **Sound Effects Summit** (Jan. 31), Joel Hodgson (of *MST-3K*)'s stand-up special, **Riffing Myself** (Feb. 7), and **Fancy Meeting You Here,** a roving comedy show during which you'll be taken on a hilarious tour of the Contemporary Jewish Museum (Feb. 8).

You: "I just want someone to tell me what to do!"

What you should know: We're not your mom.

What should you see? Guaranteed laughs will emanate from the Stand-Up Spotlight featuring spot-on impersonator **James Adomian** (look up his Jesse Ventura or his Paul Giamatti) and extremely funny **Baron Vaughn**, who's graced many



a late-night show with his insightful observations (Jan. 26). There's also **A Tribute to Key & Peele**, in which you can spend time with Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele of the Comedy Central sketch show now heading into its fourth season (Jan. 25). The **Slipnutz** variety show will feature quirky sketch comedy from original Slipnutz (as seen on *Conan*) Jon Glaser, Brian Stack, and Andy Blitz with guests Ron Funches, Maria Thayer, Jackie Kashian, and Andy Richter (Feb. 1).

THE CALENDAR

WEEK OF JANUARY 23-28, 2014 SFWEEKLY.COM/CALENDAR



FRI 1/24

Dance

UNSETTLING

Dance Brigade is calling its latest show, ***Hemorrhage***, "A dance installation at the intersection of new San Francisco and world politics." Through the eyes of artistic director Krissy Keefer, and her all-female cast, we examine issues of racism, gender inequality, and San Franciscan gentrification. Keefer says, "Businesses, populations and transportation systems have transformed before our very eyes. San Francisco has long been a hotbed for the fight for social justice. But that is changing and our artistic response is ready." With athletic modern dance, provocative text, and live drumming, Keefer will make sure that you'll leave feeling a little more prepared for the social justice struggle than you did before the show.

Dance Brigade presents *Hemorrhage: An Ablution of Hope and Despair* at 8 p.m. and continues through Feb. 8 at 3316 24th St., S.F. Admission is $20-$25; visit dancemission.com. ***Laura Jaye Cramer***

Cinema

FOG AND SHADOWS

The first warning sign of San Francisco's utter noirness is how ruthlessly, perhaps desperately, this place pretends never to have black moods. The second is its being the longtime residence of Film Noir Foundation impresario Eddie Muller, whose 12th annual **Noir City** festival skulks magnificently into the Castro this week. San Francisco actually was a capital of noir films for a while, but they've been made all over the world, as the 2014 festival's international focus attests. Muller's programming agenda, he hopes, will "change many people's long-standing ethnocentric preconceptions about film noir." Accordingly, he's got films from Argentina, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Spain, and England because, yes, those places were psychically devastated after the Second World War too. Thus the exquisitely unbearable tension in *The Wages of Fear*; the shockingly scary young Richard Attenborough in *Brighton Rock*; the great Orson Welles cuckoo clock speech in *The Third Man*; the first electric Toshiro Mifune performance in an Akira Kurosawa film, *Drunken Angel*; the heist classic *Rififi*; the fittingly titled *Never Open That Door*; and many other glamorously cynical delights. Making room, too, for some familiar American noir folk traveling abroad — Fred MacMurray in *Singapore*, Robert Mitchum in *Macao*, and Gene Tierney and Victor Mature in *The Shanghai Gesture* — this year's festival has a lot to live up to. As the tagline says, "It's a bitter little world."

Noir City 12 starts at 7:30 p.m. and continues through Feb. 2 at the Castro Theatre, 429 Castro St., S.F. Tickets are $10-$120; call 621-6350 or visit noircity.com. ***Jonathan Kiefer***

MON 1/27

Comedy

OFF TRACK

SF Sketchfest is presenting a cool variety show this evening — **Rhett Miller**, of alt-country band the Old 97's, will host an evening of music, discussion, and jokes with noted comedian and raconteur Paul F. Tompkins as his guest. If you like Texas rock 'n' roll from prolific band leaders, eclectic comedy from experienced humorists, and possibly even sketches from talented sketch comedians, this is the Sketchfest event for you. Those in the know promise that Rhett Miller's variety show is "always a blast," so what do you have to lose? Besides, haven't you heard that Monday is the new Tuesday, which used to be the new Sunday, which is now basically Thursday? It's the perfect night for an old-fashioned music-and-comedy show.

Wheels Off: The Rhett Miller Show starts at 8 p.m. at Yoshi's, 1330 Fillmore St., S.F. Tickets are $30; yoshis.com/sanfrancisco. ***Emilie Mutert***



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THE CALENDAR LISTINGS

Calendar listings are offered as a free service to SF Weekly readers and are subject to space restrictions. To have a listing added, contact Clubs and Calendar Editor John Graham by e-mail (Calendar@sfweekly.com), fax (777-1839), or mail (225 Bush St. 17th Floor, S.F., CA 94104). To change an existing listing call 536-8147. Deadline is noon Tuesday for the following week's issue. Listings rotate regularly, as space allows. Our completel listings of local events – searchable by keyword, date, and genre – are available online.

ART - GALLERIES

1AM Gallery. Clash of the Titans: Showcase of 1:6 scale figures created by Joel Emslie, Winson Ma, Kenny Wong, RC Works, Psycho Customs, Zuno, K13 Toys, Brac, Andy Piver, Anthony Mestas, and more. Wednesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 1. 1000 Howard St., S.F., 861-5089, www.1amsf.com.

4x5 Gallery. Ari Salomon: Motion Studies: Photographic abstractions. Through March 2. 442 Haight St., S.F., www.4x5gallerysf.com.

Bash Contemporary. Black & White in Color: Group show featuring Len Davis, Bob Dob, David Fenton, Caitlin Hackett, Pee Monster, Lee Harvey Roswell, and Adrienne Simms. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 8. 210 Golden Gate Avenue, S.F., 926-8573, www.bashcontemporary.com.

Bayview/Anna E. Walden Branch Library. Bayview's Historical Footprints: Redux!: Historical photography exhibit and stories by Bayview/Hunters Point elders. Daily. 5075 Third St., S.F., 355-5757, www.sfpl.org.

Brian Gross Fine Art. Freddy Chandra: Tuning In: Sculptural wall works cast in resin and acrylic. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 21. 248 Utah St., S.F., 788-1050, www.briangrossfineart.com.

Caldwell Snyder Gallery. 30x30: A 30th Anniversary Exhibition & Celebration: Group show featuring original paintings and drawings with dimensions of 30 inches by 30 inches. Mondays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 10. 341 Sutter St., S.F., 296-7896, www.caldwellsnyder.com.

California Academy of Sciences. Gallery Crawl Night-Life: Modern Eden Gallery and Public Works' Roll Up Gallery bring their art to the park for this edition of NightLife, which also features appropriately hip music from L.A.'s 100% Silk label. Thu., Jan. 23, 6-10 p.m. $10-$12. 55 Music Concourse, S.F., 379-8000, www.calacademy.org.

Catharine Clark Gallery. Nina Katchadourian: Two Libraries – Recently Sorted Books: Photographs of books whose titles combine in haiku-like word arrangements. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 15. 248 Utah St., S.F., 399-1439, www.cclarkgallery.com.

Center for New Music. Kronos at 40: Instruments from the Collection: Window gallery installation featuring large sculptural instruments specially created for Kronos Quartet by Walter Kitundu, Victor Gama, and others. Through Feb. 28. 55 Taylor St., S.F., 275-2466, www.centerfornewmusic.com.

Center for Sex & Culture. Safe Sex Bang: The Buzz Bense Collection of Safe Sex Posters: Exhibition of sex-positive posters from 1982 onward. Through Jan. 31. Free. 1349 Mission, S.F., 902-2071, www.sexandculture.org.

City Beer Store. Beth Gouldin: Plays Well with Others: Watercolor paintings. Through Jan. 31. 1168 Folsom Ste. 101, S.F., 503-1033, www.citybeerstore.com.

City College of San Francisco. 75 Years: Selections from the City College of San Francisco Photography Department, Vol. 1: Work by current and former CCSF students and faculty (in the CCSF Gallery Obscura). Through Feb. 11. 50 Phelan, S.F., 239-3000, www.ccsf.edu.

City Hall. Twisted Sisters: Reimagining Urban Portraiture: Group show featuring five photographers from San Francisco and 10 from Zurich, S.F.'s sister city in Switzerland. Through Jan. 31. sfartscommission.org. 1 Drive Carlton B. Goodlett, S.F., 554-5184, www.sfgov.org.

CordenPotts Gallery. Quietude: Group show featuring serene photographs by Max Kellenberger, Jacqueline Walters, and Ewa Monika Zebrowski. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through March 1. 49 Geary St., S.F., 680-5997, www.cordenpotts-gallery.com.

Creativity Explored. Camille Shelley Holvoet: A Particularly Picky Perfect Goddess: Inaugural solo show of oil pastel drawings. Through Feb. 19. 3245 16th St., S.F., 863-2108, www.creativityexplored.org.

Crown Point Press. Winter Group Show: Featuring work by Tomma Abts, Pia Fries, April Gornik, Markus Raetz, Laurie Reid, Amy Sillman, Pat Steir, Richard Tuttle, and Fred Wilson. Mondays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 22. 20 Hawthorne, S.F., 974-6273, www.crownpoint.com.

Dolby Chadwick Gallery. Hello, Goodbye: 15-artist group show inspired by the concept of impermanence. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 1. 210 Post, S.F., 956-3560, www.dolbychadwickgallery.com.

Fouladi Projects. Karen Barbour: No One Should Be As Friendly As Yes: Recent paintings. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through March 1. 1803 Market St., S.F., 621-2535, www.fouladiprojects.com.

Fraenkel Gallery. Nan Goldin: Nine Self-Portraits: Color photographs from the 1990s thru today. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through March 8. Peter Hujar: Love & Lust: A series of intimate B+W photographs taken by the gay artist between 1967-1986. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through March 8. 49 Geary, S.F., 981-2661, www.fraenkelgallery.com.

Gallery Paule Anglim. Nathaniel Dorsky: Film Stills: Archival pigment prints from the artist's silent films. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 8. James Sterlin Pitt: Hello Green Cosmos: Three-dimensional painted wood sculptures. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 8. 14 Geary, S.F., 433-2710, www.gallerypauleanglim.com.

George Krevsky Fine Art. Beth Van Hoesen: Portraits from the Castro: Benefit exhibit for the Rainbow Honor Walk featuring colorful paintings of Castro locals. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through March 1. 77 Geary, S.F., 397-9748, www.georgekrevskygallery.com.

George Lawson Gallery. Jacob Melchi: Nothing Is Plural: Recent paintings. Tuesdays-Thursdays, Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 1. Free. 315 Potrero Ave, S.F., 703-4400, www.georgelawsongallery.com/gallery.html.

Goethe-Institut. Superposition: Five Positions in Contemporary Art from Leipzig & Berlin: Group show featuring work by German artists Cornelia Renz, Jens Hanke, Marcel Bühler, and Peter & Torsten Ruehle. Mondays-Fridays. Continues through Feb. 4. 530 Bush, S.F., 263-8760, www.goethe.de/ins/us/saf/enindex.htm.

Gregory Lind Gallery. Tom Burckhardt: Cast Paintings: Oil paintings on cast plastic "canvases." Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 15. 49 Geary, S.F., 296-9661, www.gregorylindgallery.com.

Haines Gallery. Fundamental Abstraction III: Group show featuring Ai Weiwei, Pierre Cordier & Gundi Falk, Patsy Krebs, Kota Ezawa, Monir Farmanfarmaian, David Nash, Zheng Chongbin, and others. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through March 1. 49 Geary, S.F., 397-8114, www.hainesgallery.com.

The Harvey Milk Photography Center. Illuminations: Photographs by Ruth Bernhard and John Wimberly. Starting Jan. 25. Tuesdays-Thursdays, Saturdays, Sundays. Continues through March 5. 50 Scott, S.F., 554-9522.

Jenkins Johnson Gallery. Director's Choice: Group show featuring Annie Kevans, Michael Craig-Martin, Julian Opie, Gordon Parks, Carrie Mae Weems, and others. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 1. 464 Sutter, S.F., 677-0770, www.jenkinsjohnsongallery.com.

Lower Branch Gallery. Neighbors: A Collection of 50 Environmental Portraits: Photo essay by Troy Holden. Through Jan. 22. 233 Eddy, S.F., 525-4626, www.lowerbranch.com.

Mark Wolfe Contemporary Art. Transitions: Group show featuring Ted Andersen, Gail Dawson, Nif Hodgson, and Christopher Russell. Mondays-Fridays. Continues through Feb. 28. 1 Sutter St. Ste. 202, S.F., 369-9404, www.wolfecontemporary.com.

The McLoughlin Gallery. Daniel Healey: Sorry Entertainer: Abstract works constructed with ink transfers, tape, and paper on canvas. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 15. 49 Geary Ste. 200, S.F., www.mgart.com.

Meridian Gallery. Abby Leigh: New Works 2011/2013: Abstract oil paintings. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through March 8. 535 Powell, S.F., 398-7229, www.meridiangallery.org.

Mirus Gallery. Local: Group show of Bay Area artists. Starting Jan. 25. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 15. 540 Howard St., S.F., 543-3440, www.mirusgallery.com.

Mission: Comics & Art. Sandman: 25th Anniversary Art Show: Group show paying tribute to Neil Gaiman's landmark comic book series. Tuesdays-Sundays. Continues through Feb. 15. 3520 20th St. B, S.F., 695-1545, www.missioncomicsandart.com.

Modern Eden. Feral Creatures: Animalistic group show curated by Stephanie Chefas. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 8. 403 Francisco, S.F., 956-3303, www.moderneden.com.

Modernbook Gallery. Brigitte Carnochan: Natural Beauty: New platinum/palladium photographs. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through March 1. 49 Geary, S.F., 732-0300, www.modernbook.com.

RayKo Photo Center. Vanishing Point: Phantom Artists' League group photography show. Tuesdays-Sundays. Continues through Feb. 23. Heidi Kirkpatrick: Lost & Found: Photo-augmented objets d'art. Tuesdays-Sundays. Continues through Feb. 23. 75 Years: Selections from the City College of San Francisco Photography Department: Spotlight on contemporary photography from the 81 Bees collective. Tuesdays-Sundays. Continues through Feb. 23. 428 Third St., S.F., 495-3773, www.raykophoto.com.

Recology San Francisco. Artist in Residence Exhibitions: Includes Yulia Pinkusevich's "The Glory of a Tool Is Seldom Judged by Its Handle," Stephanie Syjuco's "Modern Ruins (Popular Cannibals)," and Brittany Watkins' "The Time Objects Tell." Fri., Jan. 24, 5-9 p.m.; Sat., Jan. 25, 1-3 p.m.; Tue., Jan. 28, 5-7 p.m. 501-503 Tunnel, S.F., 330-1400, www.sfrecycling.com/index.php.

Richmond Art Center. The Art of Living Black: 18th Annual Bay Area Black Artists Exhibition: Nonjuried group show featuring over 50 regional atists (in the Main Gallery). Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 28. The Language of Realism: Paintings by Michael Beck, Christine Hanlon, Anthony Holdsworth, and John Rampley (in the South & West Galleries). Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through March 7. Unlock the Talk: The American Teenager Project in Richmond: 100 B+W photo portraits by area high school students with accompanying audio interviews (in the Community Gallery). Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through March 7. 2540 Barrett, Richmond, 510-620-6772, www.therichmondartcenter.org.

Robert Koch Gallery. János Szász: High-contrast B+W photographs of Soviet-era Hungary from the 1950s-'70s. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Jan. 31. 49 Geary, S.F., 421-0122, www.kochgallery.com.

Robert Tat Gallery. All About the Image: Group photography show. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 22. 49 Geary, Ste. 410, S.F., 781-1122, www.roberttat.com.

Root Division. The Tools: Nora Rodriguez curated this group show that revolves around the concept of utility. Wednesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Jan. 25. 3175 17th St., S.F., 863-7668, www.rootdivision.org.

Sandra Lee Gallery. 2014 New Year Group Exhibition: Includes painting, sculpture, video, and collage. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Jan. 31. 251 Post, S.F., 291-8000, www.sandraleegallery.com.

SF Camerawork. 75 Years: Selections from the City College of San Francisco Photography Department: Work by current and former CCSF students and faculty. Wednesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 1. 657 Mission, S.F., 512-2020, www.sfcamerawork.org.

SFMOMA Artists Gallery (Fort Mason, Bldg. A). Edith Hillinger: Death Valley collage series. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 20. Sharon Shepherd: Recent paintings. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 20. Elena Zolotnitsky: Figurative oil paintings. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 20. 2 Marina Boulevard, S.F., 441-4777, www.sfmoma.org.

SFSU Campus, Cesar Chavez Student Center. Black Power * Flower Power: Photographs by Pirkle Jones and Ruth-Marion Baruch documenting the Black Panthers and Haight-Ashbury neighborhood in the late 1960s. Through Feb. 20. 1650 Holloway, S.F., 338-1112, www.sfsustudentcenter.com.

Shooting Gallery. Paul Chatem: The Guerneville Goose: New kinetic paintings. Tuesdays-Saturdays.

THU 1/23

Dance

TAKE A STAND

Previously honored with Isadora Duncan, Goldie, *SF Weekly* Black Box, and Bonnie Bird North American Choreography awards, Robert Moses' stunningly athletic troupe presents its 19th home season with a mixed bill called "***RISE***." On the program are two premieres, *The Slow Rise of a Rigid Man* and *Profligate Iniquities*, as well as the 2013 hit *NEVABAWARLDAPECE*. Inspired by the Occupy movement, as well as other historic protests and insurrections from the 19th century to the present, *NEVABAWARLDAPECE* features music by Obie and Bessie award-winning Carl Hancock Rux, as well as contributions by vocalist Laura Love, composer Corey Harris, and lighting/visual designer Elaine Buckholtz. Moses himself returns to the stage solo in *The Slow Rise of a Rigid Man*, a companion piece to his *Blood in Time*, while traditional Jewish Sephardic music forms the base for *Profligate Iniquities*.

Robert Moses' KIN presents "RISE" at 8 p.m. and continues through Jan. 26 at the Lam Research Theater at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 700 Howard St., S.F. Tickets are $25-$45; visit robertmoseskin.org. ***Irene Hsiao***

FRI 1/24

Art Exhibit

MULTI MEAD-IA

There's nothing more familiar and comforting to a '90s kid than a Lisa Frank Trapper Keeper, complete with images of kittens or pandas in shocking day-glow. Now imagine Lisa Frank had the savviness of a San Franciscan and the gutsiness of a contemporary artist, and you might get a woman like one of the four behind City Limits' **"Trapper Keeper."** The Bay Area-based ladies have collaborated in this group showing to take a look at how throwback '90s media can translate to today; Mia Christopher with bold latex forms, Jane Kim in her unexpected-item sculptures, Mie Horlyck Morgensen's humorous vinyl on paper, and Lana Williams' audacious mark-making paintings. The innovative quartet isn't afraid of loud paint, bleach, makeup, and glitter, so be prepared to get messy.

Mia Christopher, Jane Kim, Mie Horlyck Morgensen, and Lana Williams present "Trapper Keeper" at 7 p.m. through Feb. 15 at City Limits, 300 Jefferson St., Oakland. Free; visit citylimitsgallery.com. ***LJC***



Erik Tomasson

SAT 1/25

Dance

FOREST STYX

There was a special curse laid on women who didn't marry in the 19th century. Alive, they were called witches or hysterics. Dead, in the world of Théophile Gautier, they joined the wilis, a sorority of beautiful but murderous spirits who haunted the woods and danced their defenseless male victims to death. This is the premise of ***Giselle***, the great romantic ballet that opens San Francisco Ballet's 2014 season, in which the innocent peasant girl Giselle is wooed by an aristocrat who likes to play pastoral in his spare time. When she discovers his false identity and betrothal to another lady of the noble classes, Giselle's fragile heart shatters, making her the newest wili in the woods. When he comes to mourn at her grave, the haunting begins. San Francisco Ballet's rendition is choreographed by artistic director Helgi Tomasson to the classic score by Adolphe Adam.

San Francisco Ballet presents *Giselle* at 8 p.m. and continues through Feb. 2 at the War Memorial Opera House, 301 Van Ness, S.F. Tickets are $39-$340; sfballet.org. ***IH***

Continues through Feb. 1. 886 Geary St., S.F., 931-1500, www.shootinggallerysf.com.

SOMArts Cultural Center. All Possible Futures: Jon Sueda curated this group show that attempts to broaden the boundaries of graphic design. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 13. 934 Brannan, S.F., 863-1414, www.somarts.org.

Spoke Art Gallery. Third Annual Supersonic Electronic Invitational: Group show curated by Zach Tutor. Tuesdays-Thursdays, Saturdays. Continues through Jan. 25. 816 Sutter, S.F., www.spoke-art.com.

Stephen Wirtz Gallery. The Optimists: Group show featuring Maysha Mohamedi, Rebecca Morris, Ruby Neri, and Laurie Reid. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 22. 49 Geary, S.F., 433-6879, www.wirtzgallery.com.

Steven Wolf Fine Arts. Paul Mavrides: Art Work Makes You Free: Exhibit featuring thrift-scored and dumpster-dived paintings overlaid with bold text commentaries. Wednesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 15. 2747 19th St., S.F., 263-3677, www.stevenwolffinearts.com/gallery.asp.

Toomey Tourell. Maria Park: Composition: Paintings and mixed media works inspired by the François Truffaut film adaptation of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Jan. 31. 49 Geary, S.F., 989-6444, www.toomey-tourell.com.

Traywick Contemporary. Benicia Gantner: Isole: Recent vinyl collages. Starting Jan. 25. Thursdays-Saturdays. Continues through March 15. 895 Colusa, Berkeley, 510-527-1214, www.traywick.com.

Vorres Gallery. Winter Wonder: New works by Rodney Ewing and Ronn Harsh. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 15. 3681 Sacramento, S.F., 423-4345, vorresgallery.com.

White Walls Gallery. Amanda Marie: I Was Just Thinking: Paintings and stencils. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 1. 886 Geary St., S.F., 931-1500, www.whitewallssf.com.

BENEFITS

Beats for Boobs: 10-Year Anniversary: Fashion shows highlight the agenda at this annual breast cancer fundraiser, with house music DJs, dance performers, aerial acrobats, local restaurants, and others contributing to the cause as well. Sat., Jan. 25, 7 p.m., $35-$100, beatsforboobs.org. Mezzanine, 444 Jessie, S.F., 625-8880, www.mezzaninesf.com.

Beth Van Hoesen: Portraits from the Castro: Benefit exhibit for the Rainbow Honor Walk featuring colorful paintings of Castro locals. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Continues through March 1. George Krevsky Fine Art, 77 Geary, S.F., 397-9748, www.georgekrevsky-gallery.com.

Ruth's Table Benefit: Screenings of the documentary films *Ruth Asawa: Roots of an Artist* and *Hearing Voices: The Ruth's Table Story*. Thu., Jan. 23, 6:30 p.m., $30. Roxie Theater, 3117 16th St., S.F., 863-1087, www.roxie.com.

SAT 1/25

Art Exhibit

INTERIOR UPDATE

The **San Francisco Fine Print Fair** is presented by 18 members of the International Fine Print Dealers Association (IFPDA). The dealers' diverse areas of expertise make for an in-depth look at pieces that could appeal to new art collectors and aficionados. The fair features prints from the masters of the 16th and 17th centuries, Edo-era Japanese woodblock work, European and American Impressionism, 20th century American modernism, as well as contemporary pieces. The high quality prints range in price, yet many are affordable and can be purchased for around $125. A portion of ticket sales for Friday's preview benefit go toward the Achenbach Graphic Arts Council, a support group of San Francisco's Fine Arts Museums. Every print in the show is for sale, so plan enough time to take it all in, or to view and learn from leading experts from the field of print.

San Francisco Fine Print Fair continues through Jan. 26 at the Golden Gate Club of the Presidio Trust, 135 Fisher Loop, S.F. Free; call (212) 674-6095 or visit sanfrancisco-fineprintfair.com. ***LJC***

Science of Cocktails 2014: The Exploratorium's fourth annual fundraising party blends intoxicants with intellect as chemists, distillers, and mixologists explain the science behind your favorite cocktails. Tickets include open bar, snacks, and other activities. Fri., Jan. 24, 8 p.m., $120-$185. Exploratorium, Pier 15, S.F., 528-4444, www.exploratorium.edu.

CIRCUS

Circus Bella: Sun., Jan. 26, 11 a.m. & 2 p.m., $15-$20. Jewish Community Center of San Francisco, 3200 California, S.F., 292-1200, www.jccsf.org.

Cirque du Soleil: Amaluna: Starting Jan. 23, Thu., Jan. 23; Fridays, Saturdays. Continues through Feb. 9, $50+ advance, cirquedusoleil.com/amaluna. Cirque du Soleil - San Jose, 176 Asbury St., San Jose, 408-283-0784, www.cirquedusoleil.com.

Peking Acrobats: Sat., Jan. 25, 2 & 8 p.m.; Sun., Jan. 26, 3 p.m., $22-$56. UC Berkeley, Zellerbach Hall, 2430 Bancroft, Berkeley, 510-642-9988, www.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

COMEDY

13th Annual SF Sketchfest: Even in a city besotted with festivals, this comedy cavalcade stands out as one of San Francisco's biggest and most unmissable events, featuring more than 200 shows at venues all over town. The 2014 lineup includes celebrity film tributes, theatrical events, TV reunions, live podcast and radio performances, variety shows, game shows, improv nights, stand-up comedy, storytelling, workshops, music, and much more. Jan. 23-Feb. 9, sfsketchfest.com. Multiple San Francisco Locations, multiple addresses, S.F., N/A.

An Afternoon With The Venture Bros.: Featuring Steven Rattazzi, Michael Sinterniklaas, Dana Snyder, and James Urbaniak. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Sun., Jan. 26, 1 p.m., $20, sfsketchfest.com. Cobb's Comedy Club, 915 Columbus, S.F., 928-4320, www.cobbscomedy.com.

Attractive Camp: With Lauren Ashley Bishop, Keith Lowell Jensen, Joe Tobin, Irene Tu, Mo Welch, and Nicole Calasich. Sat., Jan. 25, 10 p.m., $15. Lost Weekend Video, 1034 Valencia St., S.F., 643-3373, www.lostweekendvideo.com.

Baby Talk: With Jensen Karp, Dan Levy, Natasha Leggero, April Richardson, and Nick Thune. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Sun., Jan. 26, 1 p.m., $20, sfsketchfest.com. Punch Line, 444 Battery, S.F., 397-7573, www.punchlinecomedyclub.com.

Bad Movie Night: The Last Man on Earth: Hosts Jim Fourniadis, Sherilyn Connelly, and Mikl-Em take a look back at the 1964 movie that did a disservice to Richard Matheson's novel *I Am Legend* a full four decades before Will Smith got the chance. Sun., Jan. 26, 8 p.m., $6.99. Dark Room Theater, 2263 Mission, S.F., 401-7987, www.darkroomsf.com.

Barbary Coast Comedy: With Tony Sparks, Eloisa Bravo, and Gary Anderson. Thu., Jan. 23, 7 p.m., $5, barbarycoastcomedy.com. Legionnaire Saloon, 2272 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, www.legionnaire-saloon.com.

Big City Improv: Actors take audience suggestions and create comedy from nothing. Fridays, 10 p.m., $20, bigcityimprov.com. Shelton Theater, 533 Sutter, S.F., 433-3040, www.sheltontheater.com.

Big Terrific: With Jenny Slate, Gabe Liedman, Max

SAT 1/25

Literature

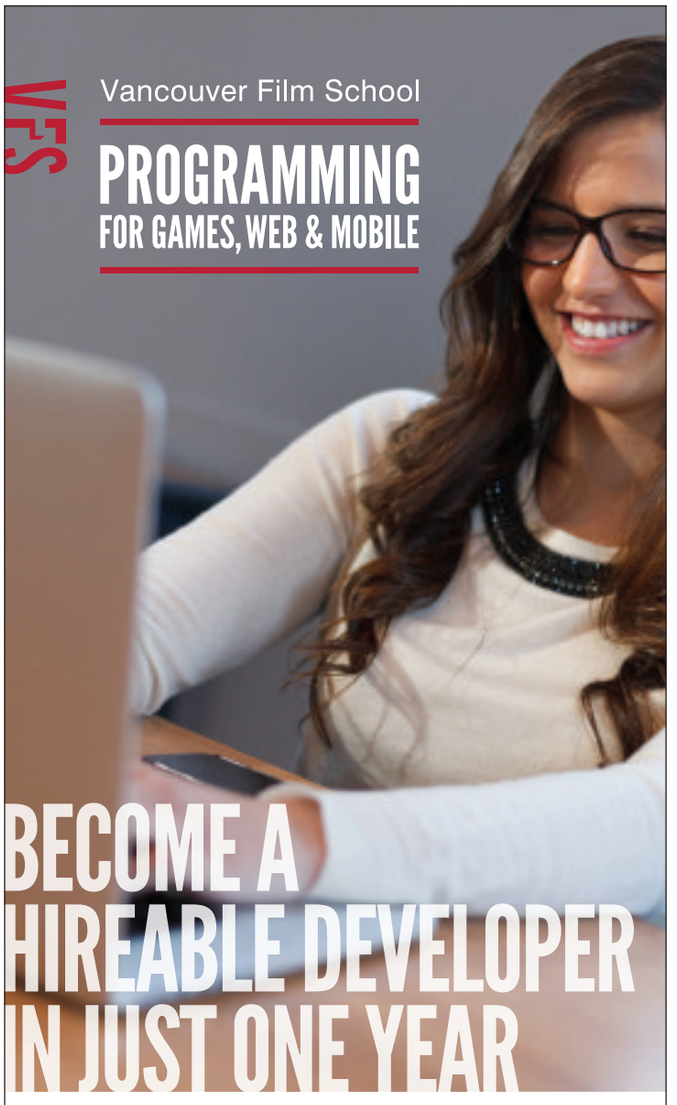
THE POETIC ANTHROPOLOGIST

Way back in 1968, **Jerome Rothenberg** started a poetry movement. "There was a sense of an opening up of poetry," he says, "and a sense that what we knew about poetry was really very limited. Poetry exists everywhere, and takes many different forms, and I began — just for my own pleasure and edification — to look into that; in the process also of writing poetry, so it was feeding my own work."

He became interested in poetry from around the world, he says, and found rich texts that were previously dismissed. As he assembled these poetic discoveries into a book titled *Technicians of the Sacred*, he marked the beginning of ethnopoetics, a movement that ties poetry to anthropology by recording oral poetry or narrative performance onto the page in order to demonstrate its poetic nature, and in the process move toward a better understanding of the source and complexity of poetry. Rothenberg's own writing developed naturally in tandem with his anthropology: He became immersed in performance, always with the intention to "bring back totality through poetry" (he quotes the Japanese poet Ooka Makoto).

Based in San Diego, Rothenberg is the author of nearly 80 books of poetry, translation, and assemblage over the span of more than 50 years. Tonight, he reads from *Eye of Witness: A Jerome Rothenberg Reader*, along with the book's co-editor, Heriberto Yépez. The book, published this past September, charts the poet's vast and varied oeuvre with the goal, as he says in the preface, "a kind of transcultural or global poetics: a poetry rooted in its place but capable of crossing borders and languages to become a virtual omnipoetics… a multivocal poetry of witness — the ubiquity of an I-as-speaking-subject that we all share — personal and transpersonal at once."

Jerome Rothenberg reads at 8 p.m. at The Public School, 2141 Broadway, Oakland. Free; visit bayareapublic-school.tumblr.com. ***Evan Karp***



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Po Bronson

Robert Schlatter

SUN 1/26

Literature

SEVEN WRITERS WALK OUT OF A BAR

So, what happens when writers leave their computers, put down their notebooks, and seek contact with the outside world? If this was *Family Feud* and you answered something containing the word "bar," you would no doubt receive the most points. But let's make things more interesting: What happens when writers venture into the great outdoors? If you answered with a chuckle, you're probably in the majority, and will be excited to learn that seven members of the San Francisco Writers' Grotto will soon answer this question for themselves while you enjoy complimentary food and booze in S.F.'s favorite sporting goods store. The Grotto has been putting together a series of comical events lately, and **Sports Debasement** ought to be no exception. Featuring Po Bronson, Laura Fraser, Tom Barbash, Diana Kapp, James Nestor, Rhodes Fishburn, and Caroline Paul, the program includes a raffle with some rad prizes and special discounts on the store's merchandise. A percentage of all purchases will be donated to Scholar Match.

Sports Debasement starts at 5 p.m. at Sports Basement, 1590 Bryant St., S.F. Admission is a $5-$10 sliding scale; visit porchlightsf.com. ***EK***

Silvestri, Jon Daly, Noah Garfinkel, Joe Mande, and Eugene Mirman. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Sat., Jan. 25, 8 p.m., $25, sfsketchfest.com. Cobb's Comedy Club, 915 Columbus, S.F., 928-4320, www.cobbscomedy.com.

The Business: A Comedy Show: Featuring Sean Keane, Bucky Sinister, Caitlin Gill, Nato Green, and guests. Wednesdays, 8 p.m., $5, thebusinesscomedy.com. Dark Room Theater, 2263 Mission, S.F., 401-7987, www.darkroomsf.com.

Cobb's Comedy Showcase: Wed., Jan. 22, 8 p.m., $12.50. Cobb's Comedy Club, 915 Columbus, S.F., 928-4320, www.cobbscomedy.com.

Comedy Blast: Stand-up comedy with Danny Dechi and guests. Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m., free, dannydechi.com. Neck of the Woods, 406 Clement St., S.F., 387-6343, www.neckofthewoodssf.com.

Comedy Film Nerds: With Graham Elwood, Chris Mancini, D.C. Pierson, Nick Thune, and Dan Van Kirk. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Sat., Jan. 25, 1 p.m., $20, sfsketchfest.com. Punch Line, 444 Battery, S.F., 397-7573, www.punchlinecomedyclub.com.

Comedy Night: Open mic hosted by Tony Sparks. Thursdays, 7 p.m., free. BrainWash Cafe & Laundromat, 1122 Folsom, S.F., 861-3663, www.brainwash.com.

Comet Club Comedy: Your free weekly chance to laugh in the Marina (instead of at it). Thursdays, 8:30 p.m., free. Comet Club, 3111 Fillmore, S.F., 567-5589.

Cup o' Comedy: Stand-up comedy with Danny Dechi and guests. Second and Fourth Thursday of every month, 7 p.m., free, dannydechi.com. Emma's Coffeehouse, 5549 Geary St., S.F., 933-6632.

The Cynic Cave: With J.C. Coccoli, Brian Frange, Mary Patterson, Jonathan Rowell, Philip Schallberger, and Rob Stern. Sat., Jan. 25, 8 p.m., $15. Lost Weekend Video, 1034 Valencia St., S.F., 643-3373, www.lostweekendvideo.com.

Dave Foley & Kevin McDonald: Presented by SF Sketchfest. Fri., Jan. 24, 7:30 p.m., $25, sfsketchfest.com. Brava Theater Center, 2781 24th St., S.F., 641-7657, www.brava.org.

David Koechner: Presented by SF Sketchfest. Sat., Jan. 25, 8 & 10:30 p.m., $25. The Independent, 628 Divisadero, S.F., 771-1420, www.theindependentsf.com.

Deep Shit Podcast: With Baron Vaughn, Caitlin Gill, and more. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Sun., Jan. 26, 4 p.m., $20, sfsketchfest.com. Punch Line, 444 Battery, S.F., 397-7573, www.punchlinecomedyclub.com.

Dueling Pianos at Johnny Foley's: Merry musical sing-alongs. Wednesdays-Saturdays, 9 p.m., free, duelingpianosatfoleys.com. Johnny Foley's Irish House, 243 O'Farrell St., S.F., 954-0777, www.johnnyfoleys.com.

Egghead Comedy: Brainiac laughs (and pinball) with Duat Mai, Ethan Orloff, Natasha Muse, Jonathan Ott, and Nina G. Sat., Jan. 25, 8 p.m., $15. Pacific Pinball Museum, 1510 Webster, Alameda, 510-769-1349, www.pacificpinball.org.

Fun Times With Friends: Wed., Jan. 22, 8 p.m. Lost Weekend Video, 1034 Valencia St., S.F., 643-3373, www.lostweekendvideo.com.

Funny Shits: With Kaseem Bentley, J.C. Coccoli, Anita Drieseberg, Jesse Elias, Andrew Holmgren, Brendan Lynch, Ronn Vigh, Mike Spiegelman, and Kate Willett. Sun., Jan. 26, 8 p.m., $10. The Rite Spot Cafe, 2099 Folsom, S.F., 552-6066, www.ritespotcafe.net.

Gelmania: With Brett Gelman and Jon Daly. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Fri., Jan. 24, 8 p.m., $20, sfsketchfest.com. Verdi Club, 2424 Mariposa, S.F., 861-5048, www.verdiclub.net.

The Great Debate: Girls vs. Golden Girls — Who Empower Us, and Who are a Bunch of Stunted, Oppressed Degenerates?: With Matt Price and Ilyse Mimoun. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Fri., Jan. 24, 8 p.m., $15, sfsketchfest.com. Stage Werx 446, 446 Valencia St, S.F., www.stagewerx.org.

Harvey's Funny Tuesdays: Hosted by Ronn Vigh. Tuesdays, 9 p.m., free. Harvey's, 500 Castro, S.F., 431-4278, www.harveyssf.com.

Heidecker & Wood: Presented by SF Sketchfest. Fri., Jan. 24, 8 p.m., $25. Rickshaw Stop, 155 Fell, S.F., 861-2011, www.rickshawstop.com.

Invite Them Up: With Eugene Mirman, Bobby Tisdale, James Adomian, Natasha Leggero, Joe Mande, and Nick Thune. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Sat., Jan. 25, 10:30 p.m., $25, sfsketchfest.com. Cobb's Comedy Club, 915 Columbus, S.F., 928-4320, www.cobbscomedy.com.

Iron Comic: With Nato Green, Moshe Kasher, James Adomian, Caitlin Gill, T.J. Miller, Rick Overton, and Brent Weinbach. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Fri., Jan. 24, 8 p.m., $25, sfsketchfest.com. Cobb's Comedy Club, 915 Columbus, S.F., 928-4320, www.cobbscomedy.com.

Jenny Slate & Friends: With Jon Daly, Brett Gelman, Max Silvestri, and Nick Thune. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Fri., Jan. 24, 10:30 p.m., $25, sfsketchfest.com. Cobb's Comedy Club, 915 Columbus, S.F., 928-4320, www.cobbscomedy.com.

Kris Tinkle: Live CD recording. Through Jan. 23, $16. Punch Line, 444 Battery, S.F., 397-7573, www.punchlinecomedyclub.com.

The Layover Comedy Night: Tuesdays, 8:30 p.m., free. The Layover, 1517 Franklin, Oakland, 510-834-1517, www.oaklandlayover.com.

Mike Birbiglia: Thank God for Jokes: Two nights with the most famous sleepwalker in comedy. Sun., Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m.; Tue., Jan. 28, 7:30 p.m., $29.50-$52 advance. Palace of Fine Arts, 3301 Lyon, S.F., 567-6642, www.palaceoffinearts.org.

The Mission Position: Weekly stand-up comedy showcase hosted by Matt Lieb, Matt Louv, and Kate Willett. Thursdays, 8 p.m., $10, missionpositionlive.com. Lost Weekend Video, 1034 Valencia St., S.F., 643-3373, www.lostweekendvideo.com.

Mortified: Tournament of Angst!: Presented by SF Sketchfest. Tue., Jan. 28, 8 p.m., $20, sfsketchfest.com. Punch Line, 444 Battery, S.F., 397-7573, www.punchlinecomedyclub.com.

Nightlife on Mars: Free weekly comedy night with Nightlife on Mars (Ryan Cronin, Joe Nguyen, Adam McLaughlin, Red Scott, and Jeff Reitman) plus guests. Thursdays, 8:30 p.m., free, nightlifeonmars.com. Murphy's Pub, 217 Kearny St., S.F., 693-9588.

The Oy of Sex: Love addiction is a laughing matter in this solo theater show (intended for ages 17+) written and performed by stand-up comedian Alicia Dattner. Saturdays, 5 p.m. Continues through Feb. 22, $20-$100, aliciadattner.com. The Marsh Theater, 1062 Valencia St., S.F., 826-5750, www.themarsh.org.

Mark Pitta & Friends: Tuesdays, 8 p.m., $16-$26. 142 Throckmorton Theatre, 142 Throckmorton, Mill Valley, 383-9600, www.142throckmortontheatre.com.

Porchlight: Tough Crowd: Comical storytelling with Beth Lisick, Arline Klatte, Anthony Bedard, Caitlin Gill, Kevin McDonald, April Richardson, Anna Seregina, and Nick Thune. Sun., Jan. 26, 8 p.m., $20, porchlightsf.com. Verdi Club, 2424 Mariposa, S.F., 861-5048, www.verdiclub.net.

The Purple Onion at Kells: Cellar Dwellers: Wednesdays, Thursdays, 8:15 p.m., $5, (415) 921-2051, purpleonionatkells.com. Kells Irish Restaurant & Bar, 530 Jackson, S.F., www.kellsirish.com.

The Purple Onion at Kells: New Talent Showcase: Wednesdays, Thursdays, 7 p.m., $5, (415) 921-2051, purpleonionatkells.com. Kells Irish Restaurant & Bar, 530 Jackson, S.F., www.kellsirish.com.

The Purple Onion at Kells: The Later Show: Wednesdays, Thursdays, 10 p.m., $5, (415) 921-2051, purpleonionatkells.com. Kells Irish Restaurant & Bar, 530 Jackson, S.F., www.kellsirish.com.

Say Hello to My Little Funny: A Night of Short Films Made by Comedians: Includes films by Lily Tomlin, Bill Burr, T.J. Miller, Grant Lyon, Mike Lemcke, Anita Dreiseberg, Anna Seregina, Brent Weinbach, and more. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Tue., Jan. 28, 8 p.m., $15, sfsketchfest.com. Cobb's Comedy Club, 915 Columbus, S.F., 928-4320, www.cobbscomedy.com.

Secret Improv Society: Underground improvisational theater. Saturdays, 10 p.m., $17 advance, improvsociety.com. Shelton Theater, 533 Sutter, S.F., 433-3040, www.sheltontheater.com.

The SF Sketchfest Dozen: With Phoebe Robinson, Sara Schaefer, and Matt Morales. Fri., Jan. 24, 8 p.m.; Sat., Jan. 25, 9:15 p.m., $20, sfsketchfest.com. Punch Line, 444 Battery, S.F., 397-7573, www.punchlinecomedyclub.com.

The SF Sketchfest Dozen: With Dominic Dierkes, D.C. Pierson, and Shanti Charan. Fri., Jan. 24, 10:15 p.m.; Sat., Jan. 25, 7 p.m., $20, sfsketchfest.com. Punch Line, 444 Battery, S.F., 397-7573, www.punchlinecomedyclub.com.

SF Sketchfest Tribute to Key & Peele: With Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele. Sat., Jan. 25, 1 p.m., sold out, sfsketchfest.com. Cobb's Comedy Club, 915 Columbus, S.F., 928-4320, www.cobbscomedy.com.

SF Sketchfest Tribute to Tenacious D: An Evening of Conversation, Clips, and Songs: With Jack Black, Kyle Gass, and moderator Paul F. Tompkins. Thu., Jan. 23, 9:30 p.m., sold out, sfsketchfest.com. The Castro Theatre, 429 Castro, S.F., 621-6120, www.castrotheatre.com.

Shit & Champagne: D'Arcy Drollinger presents "a Whitesploitation comedy with dance" featuring Matthew Martin, Rotimi Agbabiaka, Steven Le-May, Nancy French, and Seton Brown. Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m. Continues through Feb. 8, $20, shitandchampagne.eventbrite.com. Rebel, 1760 Market, S.F., 431-4202.

Slanted Comedy: Asian comedy showcase. Thu., Jan. 23, 8 p.m., $15. Cobb's Comedy Club, 915 Columbus, S.F., 928-4320, www.cobbscomedy.com.

Smug Shift: With Moshe Kasher, Brent Weinbach, Graham Elwood, Natasha Leggero, Sara Schaefer, and Nick Thune. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Fri., Jan. 24, 10:30 p.m., $25, sfsketchfest.com. Verdi Club, 2424 Mariposa, S.F., 861-5048, www.verdiclub.net.

Stand-Up Spotlight: With James Adomian, Baron Vaughn, and Mary Van Note. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Sun., Jan. 26, 8 p.m., $20, sfsketchfest.com. Cobb's Comedy Club, 915 Columbus, S.F., 928-4320, www.cobbscomedy.com.

Storking Comedy: Weekly stand-up routines followed by bonus interview segments. Thursdays, 6:30 p.m., free, facebook.com/SylvanProductions. Stork Club, 2330 Telegraph, Oakland, 510-444-6174, www.storkclubоakland.com.

Talkies: With George Chen, Adam Sokol, Anna Seregina, Claire Titleman, Danny Jolles, Land Smith, and Sad Vicious. Fri., Jan. 24, 8 p.m., $15. Lost Weekend Video, 1034 Valencia St., S.F., 643-3373, www.lostweekendvideo.com.

Thrilling Adventure Hour: With the Workjuice Players and guests John DiMaggio, Dave Foley, Karen Gillan, Keegan-Michael Key, Melanie Lynskey, Kevin Murphy, Paul & Storm, Jason Ritter, and James Urbaniak. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Sat., Jan. 25, 7 & 9:30 p.m., $40-$50, sfsketchfest.com. Marines' Memorial Theatre, 609 Sutter, S.F., 673-6672, www.marineclub.com/theatre.php.

Tim Heidecker & Neil Hamburger: Presented by SF Sketchfest. Sat., Jan. 25, 10:30 p.m., $25, sfsketchfest.com. Verdi Club, 2424 Mariposa, S.F., 861-5048, www.verdiclub.net.

Totally J/K: With Joe Mande, Noah Garfinkel, Jon Daly, Gabe Liedman, Max Silvestri, and Jenny Slate. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Sat., Jan. 25, 11:45 p.m., $15, sfsketchfest.com. Punch Line, 444 Battery, S.F., 397-7573, www.punchlinecomedyclub.com.

Totally Looped: Old movies get hilarious new dialogue thanks to Dan Castellaneta, Keegan-Michael Key, Deb Lacusta, Joe Liss, Rick Overton, Angela V. Shelton, and Gary Anthony Williams. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Sat., Jan. 25, 4 p.m.; Sun., Jan. 26, 4 p.m., $25, sfsketchfest.com. Roxie Theater, 3117 16th St., S.F., 863-1087, www.roxie.com.

Wits with John Moe: Comedy and music with Paget Brewster, Nellie McKay, Eugene Mirman, Paul F. Tompkins, and Loudon Wainwright III. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Fri., Jan. 24, 7:30 p.m., $35, sfsketchfest.com. Marines' Memorial Theatre, 609 Sutter, S.F., 673-6672, www.marineclub.com/theatre.php.

SUN 1/26

Storytelling

THE WHOLE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT LAUGHS

Porchlight, A Storytelling Series collaborates with nearly everyone (SF Film Fest, Creativity Explored, the Bay Area Science Festival), but its ongoing gig with SF Sketchfest, a local comedy festival, might be the most natural match — what better mix than punchline pros and truthful tales, told without the aid of notes? The all-star lineup includes Porchlight favorite Anthony Bedard, who seems to have a grab bag of stories for every occasion; the 2013 *East Bay Express* best comedian Caitlin Gill; *Kids in the Hall* founder Kevin McDonald; hilarious, proud-to-be-rude straight-talker Anna Seregina; Nick Thune of *Conan*, *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*, and *The Tonight Show* notoriety; and Los Angeles-based April Richardson, who produces Chelsea Handler's show and writes personal-experience-based stand-up. Porchlight founders Beth Lisick and Arline Klatte will host the show, themed "tough guy."

Porchlight starts at 8 p.m. at Verdi Club, 2424 Mariposa St., S.F. Admission is $20-$25; visit porchlightsf.com. ***EK***

DANCE - PERFORMANCES

Hemorrhage: An Ablution of Hope and Despair: Inspired by the evictions occurring as San Francisco's Mission District becomes a bedroom community for Silicon Valley techies — as well as ongoing global catastrophes such as climate change, racism, and gender discrimination — choreographer Krissy Keefer imagines a post-apocalyptic junkyard occupied by exiled women who dance and drum out their political hopes and fears. Starting Jan. 24, Thursdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m.; Sundays, 6 p.m. Continues through Feb. 8, $15-$30. Dance Mission Theater, 3316 24th St., S.F., 273-4633, www.dancemission.com.

Man in a Case: Mikhail Baryshnikov stars in this Big Dance Theater production that adapts two Anton Chekhov stories into a mix of movement and drama. Starting Jan. 25, Tuesdays-Sundays. Continues through Feb. 16, $45-$125, bigdancetheater.org. Berkeley Repertory's Roda Stage, 2025 Addison, Berkeley, 510-647-2949, www.berkeleyrep.org.

Mary Armentrout Dance Theater: Reveries and Elegies: A wandering (and ever-evolving) site-specific performance installation. Fridays, Saturdays. Continues through Jan. 26, $20 advance purchases only, maryarmentroutdancetheater.com. Milkbar (at the Sunshine Biscuit Factory), 851 81st Ave, Oakland.

Robert Moses' Kin: Rise: RMK's 19th annual home season includes two world premiere works: *Profligate Iniquities* and *The Slow Rise of a Rigid Man*. Jan. 23-26, 8 p.m., $25-$45, robertmoseskin.org. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Lam Research Theater, 700 Howard, S.F., 495-6360, www.ybca.org.

S.F. Ballet: Giselle: Choreographed by Helgi Tomasson. Sat., Jan. 25, 8 p.m.; Sun., Jan. 26, 2 p.m.; Tue., Jan. 28, 8 p.m.; Wed., Jan. 29, 7:30 p.m.; Thu., Jan. 30, 8 p.m.; Fri., Jan. 31, 8 p.m.; Sat., Feb. 1, 2 & 8 p.m.; Sun., Feb. 2, 2 p.m., $36-$212, sfballet.org. War Memorial Opera House, 301 Van Ness, S.F., 864-3330, www.sfwmpac.org.

S.F. Ballet: Phenomenal: San Francisco Ballet's opening night gala features a cocktail reception and dinner at City Hall, followed by a performance across the street at the Opera House. Wed., Jan. 22, 5 p.m., $50-$1250, sfballet.org. War Memorial Opera House, 301 Van Ness, S.F., 864-3330, www.sfwmpac.org.

FESTIVALS

13th Annual SF Sketchfest: Even in a city besotted with festivals, this comedy cavalcade stands out as one of San Francisco's biggest and most unmissable events, featuring more than 200 shows at venues all over town. The 2014 lineup includes celebrity film tributes, theatrical events, TV reunions, live podcast and radio performances, variety shows, game shows, improv nights, stand-up comedy, storytelling, workshops, music, and much more. Jan. 23-Feb. 9, sfsketchfest.com. Multiple San Francisco Locations, multiple addresses, S.F., N/A.

Bay Area International Children's Film Festival: A "playdate for the imagination" that includes feature films, short films, animation workshops, music, and more. Jan. 25-26, 10 a.m., $7-$25. Chabot Space & Science Center, 10000 Skyline, Oakland, 510-336-7300, www.chabotspace.org.

Noir City: 12th Annual San Francisco Film Noir Festival: Eddie Muller and his partners in cinematic crime return with another stark reminder that the "good old days" had plenty of bad apples to go around. This year the festival goes global — featuring post-WWII noirs from Argentina, France,

Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Mexico, Norway, and Spain — for those who prefer their femmes fatales with a foreign accent. Jan. 24-Feb. 4, $10-$120, noircity.com. The Castro Theatre, 429 Castro, S.F., 621-6120, www.castrotheatre.com.

LITERARY EVENTS

An Evening with Nick Turse: The investigative journalist presents his intense new nonfiction book, *Kill Anything That Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam*, in conversation with Oscar Villalon. Mon., Jan. 27, 7 p.m., free. City Lights Books, 261 Columbus, S.F., 362-8193, www.citylights.com.

Círculo de Lectores de Literatura en Español: Spanish-language book club. Fourth Tuesday of every month, 7 p.m., free. Modern Times Bookstore, 2919 24th St., S.F., 282-9246, www.moderntimesbookstore.com.

The Day of the Locust: Nathanael West's classic novel about Hollywood is brought to life via stage readings and photography by Lucy Gray, Fred Martin, Sam Hamm, Sarah Cabrol, Jan Halpern, and Zachary Thomson. Wed., Jan. 22, 6 p.m., $10-$20. Mechanics' Institute Library, 57 Post, S.F., 393-0100, www.milibrary.org.

Dennis McKenna: The ethnopharmacologist and psychedelic researcher discusses his book *The Brotherhood of the Screaming Abyss: My Life with Terence McKenna*. Tue., Jan. 28, 7 p.m., free. The Emerald Tablet, 80 Fresno St., S.F., 500-2323, www.emtab.org.

The Erotic Reading Circle: Read your erotic writing pieces and get feedback from skilled sex writers. Fourth Wednesday of every month, 7:30 p.m., Donation, 902-2071, writingourselveswhole.org. Center for Sex & Culture, 1349 Mission, S.F., www.sexandculture.org.

Free Form: Spoken word and zine reading by students from Oakland School for the Arts. Fri., Jan. 24, 1:15 p.m., free. Rock Paper Scissors Collective, 2278 Telegraph, Oakland, 510-238-9171, www.rpscollective.com.

Jarett Kobek & Nick Mamatas: Two authors read from their respective novels, *BTW* and *Love Is the Law*. Wed., Jan. 22, 7 p.m., free. The Green Arcade, 1680 Market, S.F., 431-6800, www.thegreenarcade.com.

Kim Fu: Discussing her new book, *For Today I Am a Boy*, in conversation with Kristin Elizabeth Clark. Thu., Jan. 23, 7 p.m., free. City Lights Books, 261 Columbus, S.F., 362-8193, www.citylights.com.

Kirstin Chen: Launch party for the San Francisco author's debut novel, *Soy Sauce for Beginners*. Wed., Jan. 22, 7:30 p.m., free. The Booksmith, 1644 Haight, S.F., 863-8688, www.booksmith.com.

The Magnet Book Club: Monthly discussion of books by gay authors or featuring gay themes. Last Tuesday of every month, 7:30 p.m., free. Magnet, 4122 18th St., S.F., 581-1600, www.magnetsf.org.

Melinda Chateauvert: The activist and historian shares *Sex Workers Unite: A History of the Movement from Stonewall to Slutwalk*. Tue., Jan. 28, 7:30 p.m., free. Books Inc./Castro, 2275 Market, S.F., 864-6777, www.booksinc.net.

Moazzam Sheikh: Reading from *Cafe Le Whore and Other Stories*. Wed., Jan. 22, 7 p.m., free. Green Apple Books, 506 Clement, S.F., 387-2272, www.greenapplebooks.com.

Paxton Gate Storyhour: Readings of chosen books for children. Thursdays, noon, free, 252-9990. Paxton Gate's Curiosities for Kids, 766 Valencia, S.F., www.paxtongate.com.

Poetry at the 33: Monthly open mic with featured poet. Last Tuesday of every month, 7 p.m., free. 3300 Club, 3300 Mission St., S.F., 826-6886, www.3300club.com.

Porchlight Open Door: The storytellers at Porchlight host this open mic at which the best 5-minute story about the monthly theme wins $50. Last Monday of every month, 7 p.m., $5, porchlightsf.com. Hemlock Tavern, 1131 Polk, S.F., 923-0923, www.hemlocktavern.com.

Red Light Lit: Bad Habits: Book release party featuring readings by Jayinee Basu, Cassandra Dallet, Laura Goode, Mary Julia Klimenko, Kelly McClorey, Brontez Purnell, and others, plus music by Rykarda Parasol. Sun., Jan. 26, 7 p.m., $10-$15, facebook.com/redlightlit. Red Devil Lounge, 1695 Polk, S.F., 921-1695, www.reddevillounge.com.

Richard Powers: The National Book Award-winning author discusses his new novel, *Orfeo*, in conversation with Adam Johnson. Mon., Jan. 27, 6 p.m., $7-$20. Commonwealth Club, 595 Market, S.F., 597-6700, www.commonwealthclub.org.

Ron Isetti: Reading from *On Those Promising Shores of the Pacific: A History of Saint Mary's College*. Tue., Jan. 28, 7 p.m., free. Green Apple Books, 506 Clement, S.F., 387-2272, www.greenapplebooks.com.

San Francisco's Queer Open Mic: Monthly LGBT readings (and more) since 2004. Fourth Friday of every month, 7:30 p.m., donation, queeropenmic.com. Modern Times Bookstore, 2919 24th St., S.F., 282-9246, www.moderntimesbookstore.com.

Six-Word Memoirs on Jewish Life: Live from the CJM: Launch party for a new media installation based on *Smith* magazine's Six-Word Memoir project, with readings by Piper Kerman, Lori Starr, Lana and Stephanie Volftsun, and more. Thu., Jan. 23, 6 p.m., $5 (includes museum admission). Contemporary Jewish Museum, 736 Mission, S.F., 655-7800, www.thecjm.org.

Sports Debasement: When Writers Get Physical: The San Francisco Writers' Grotto hosts authors Tom Barbash, Po Bronson, Rhodes Fishburn, Laura Fraser, Diana Kapp, James Nestor, and Caroline Paul. Sun., Jan. 26, 5 p.m., $5-$10, facebook.com/sfgrotto. The Sports Basement, 1590 Bryant St., S.F., 575-3000, www.sportsbasement.com/SS_web_bryant.asp.

Thursdays at Readers: Weekly poetry readings. Thursdays, 6:30 p.m., free. Readers Bookstore, Building C, Fort Mason Center, S.F., 771-1076, www.friendssfpl.org/?Readers_FM.

Under the Influence: Singing Doctrine at the Nexus: Evan Karp presents readings by Channing Kennedy, Simona Schneider, Jason R. Jimenez, Jason Bayani, and Eric Sneathen. Fri., Jan. 24, 7:30 p.m., $5 suggested donation. The Emerald Tablet, 80 Fresno St., S.F., 500-2323, www.emtab.org.

Word Performances: Poets Todd and Cybele Zufolo Siegel host a heavy-hitting lineup that features a little bit of everything: comedians Nato Green and Zahra Noorbakhsh; journalist Sylvie Simmons (*I'm Your Man*); performance poet Tim Toaster Henderson; novelist Zarina Zabrisky (*We, Monsters*); short story writer and frequent NPR contributor Doug Cordell; and more. Wed., Jan. 22, 8 p.m., $15, wordperformances.com. The Lost Church, 65 Capp St., S.F., 437-0593, www.thelostchurch.com.

Writing Without Walls: Begin Again: Readings by Melusina Gomez, Rosemary Griggs, Marcus Lund, Jane McDermott, Tomas Moniz, and Jon Sindell. Thu., Jan. 23, 7:30 p.m. Cafe Du Soleil, 200 Fillmore, S.F., 934-8637.

THEATER

Beach Blanket Babylon: Steve Silver's musical revue spoofs pop culture with extravagant costumes. Wednesdays-Sundays, $25-$130, beachblanketbabylon.com. Club Fugazi, 678 Green, S.F., 421-4222, www.beachblanketbabylon.com.

Can You Dig It? The '60s – Back Down East 14th: 90-minute autobiographical solo show by Don Reed. Saturdays, 8:30 p.m.; Sundays, 7 p.m. Continues through Feb. 2, $25-$50, themarsh.org. The Marsh Berkeley, 2120 Allston, Berkeley, 510-704-8291, www.themarsh.org.

Cinderella: Musical fantasy produced by the Children's Theatre Association of San Francisco. Sat., Jan. 25, 10:30 a.m. & 1 p.m.; Sat., Feb. 1, 10:30 a.m. & 1 p.m., $12, ctasf.org. Palace of Fine Arts, 3301 Lyon, S.F., 567-6642, www.palaceoffinearts.org.

TUE 1/28

Storytelling

DEAR DIARY, I'M AWFUL

Just about everyone has a few things from childhood they would prefer stay hidden. Ours is a short story about a mysterious blob that eats school children. It was written in Mrs. Knecht's sixth-grade English class, and is full of the hideous phrasing and gratuitous grossness that only a young boy can muster. Thankfully, this travesty of storytelling is safely boxed up, gathering dust in an undisclosed location. The idea of reading it on stage fills us with a paralyzing dread. We would be, to put it mildly, mortified. Which is exactly what the folks behind the reading series **Mortified** have in mind. The show brings a rotating cast of entertainers to read from diaries, poems, and songs created during their formative years. The format might sound scary, but the series has been wildly successful. Newsweek called it a "cultural phenomenon," and Mortified counts the creators of *This American Life*, The Onion AV Club, and *Entertainment Weekly* among its fans.

Mortified starts at 8 p.m. at Punch Line, 444 Battery St., S.F. Tickets are $20; call 397-7573 or visit punchlinecomedyclub.com. ***Devin Holt***

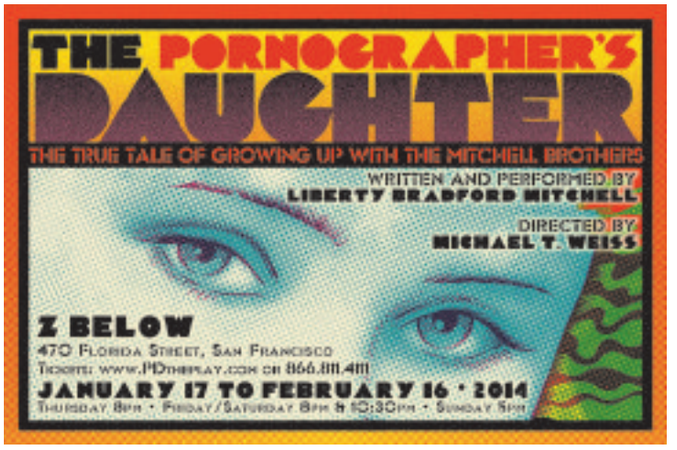
TUE 1/28

Lecture

SURVIVING THE SHIFT

In Kurt Vonnegut's first novel, *Player Piano*, there are two classes of people: engineers and everyone else. The vast majority of work is automated, and anyone without an aptitude for operating machines lives across the river. They are poor, bored, and have few options. The story ends with an uprising. The poor destroy the machines that took their jobs, and then promptly begin rebuilding them. The book was published in 1952, but reads like it could be about our own times. Consider: Google claims its self-driving cars will be available within a decade. Someone recently threw a brick at one of its employee shuttle buses. As technology workers move into San Francisco, everyone else moves across the water. Into this combustible mix of job insecurity and wealthy tech know-how come Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee, both researchers at MIT. Their new book, ***The Second Machine Age***, outlines the many ways that digital technology will change the economy, and offers strategies for surviving the shift. Their ideas include reforming education and "using ingenuity to race with machines," but not an uprising.

The Second Machine Age discussion starts at 6 p.m. at the Commonwealth Club, 595 Market St., S.F. Tickets are $7-$20; call 597-6700 or visit commonwealthclub.org. ***Devin Holt***



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New World, Old World

Two plays, one historic yet frenetic, the other fresh and leisurely, shed light on the future of theater.

By Lily Janiak



One play out of 30, performed in an hour, already forgotten.

Chris Baldwin

To any who suggest that theater is an irrelevant, dying art form (as naysayers have done for hundreds of years), consider the San Francisco Neo-Futurists. This troupe just opened *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind* in an open-ended run and lives up to its name. In their hands, theater is the future, and the future is now.

At the same time, this show is just a new iteration of an old idea — specifically, a 25-year-old idea. The Neo-Futurists were formed in Chicago in 1998, and the first spinoff, the New York Neo-Futurists, came into being in 2004. Those troupes also perform, and have been performing since their founding, the same play, *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind*, which isn't so much a script as a concept: 30 plays in 60 minutes. The audience has a "menu" of numbered play titles and, after each play has concluded, calls out the play it wants performed next. SF Neo-Futurists, the second descendant of the original company, also introduce chance into the ticket prices; at the door, spectators roll a die and add that number to $10 to get their admission cost. Also, at the end of the show, an audience member rolls another die to determine how many of the plays must be removed and replaced from the docket by the next weekend. The show thus varies starkly week to week, with a flurry of script generation and rehearsing in between.

The show is also a race against time. At rise, the performers set a timer, and if the performers don't make it through all 30 plays in 60 minutes, they simply won't perform the remainder. This means the writer-director-performers, who can also change from week to week, work at a frenetic pace, scrambling through scene changes during which they might give up on reverting to full costume from full nudity.



Nick Garcia and Carla Pauli *The River Bride.*

Benjamin Privitt

This pace feels so akin to the way the digital age has altered our perception that it's scary — and familiarly riveting. *TMLMTBGB* is the news feed of plays, a semi-random assortment of pithy content where you never have to sit long with the duds (and when you must, you're in a cleverly outfitted cabaret space, with a bar inside the theater). But even more surprising than the dearth of bad apples is just how tasty the good ones are. The ensemble members (Adam Smith, Steven Westdahl, Megan Cohen, Ryan Good, Will Caldwell, and Zoë Lehman, the night I saw it) have a deep understanding of both the form's limits as well as its possibilities, reaching heights of comedy and pathos in mere seconds. They are ruthless winnowers of wheat from chaff, but they let their audiences savor the morsels that emerge.

San Rafael's AlterTheater Ensemble is also dedicated to stretching the boundaries of what theater can be; it stages its shows in vacant storefronts along the town's main corridor. If the spaces occasionally make for awkward staging, the expansive shop windows simultaneously invite the street into the show and bring theater out to the public. The 10-year-old company's programming, however, errs on the more traditional side, especially with its latest, *The River Bride*, which won the 2013 National Latino Playwriting Award.

Here in its world premiere production, Marisela Treviño Orta's play is, in a way, not too different from the oldest theater in the Western canon in that it stages a myth — the Brazilian myth of river dolphins who turn into men for three days each June. In their time ashore, they must convince a woman to love and marry them. If they succeed, they can remain human forever; if they fail, they are banished to the river and its crippling loneliness for another year.

Orta's writing is gentle and unhurried, with lines like, "A heart can heal. You have loved once. That's a good thing — it means your heart knows how." Her male characters have the Old World quality of always being in possession of themselves even when they're angry, and her women seem wise as grandmothers (or at least they think they are) even if they're very young. The moments of stillness in her writing provide an excellent vehicle for Carla Pauli as Helena, a youthful, quiet, and thoughtful woman who finds herself the object of sudden and strong attraction for Moises (Nick Garcia), a man who literally washes ashore and who won't reveal anything about his past. Under the direction of Ann Brebner and Jeanette Harrison, Pauli makes Helena's shyness contagious. Her thoughtful rendering of Helena's every qualm, tremble, and fluttering half-smile makes a spark of romantic connection feel like a tectonic shift.

If the courtship doesn't build from scene to scene as much as it could, Orta's lovely play nonetheless offers a tender but honest portrait of love, loss, and then life as making do.

Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind
Fridays and Saturdays at Boxcar Playhouse, 505 Natoma St., S.F. Tickets are $11-$16; visit sfneofuturists.com.

The River Bride
Through Feb. 2 at 1344 Fourth St., San Rafael, and Feb. 13-16 at ACT's Costume Shop, 1117 Market St., S.F. Tickets are $25; visit altertheater.org.

The Elitist's Guide to *The Bachelor*

I know you're out there. You hate reality TV. You see it — and rightly so — in all its pettiness, its vindictiveness, its exploitation, its ugliness, and its palpable desperation, and it makes you weep for your fellow man. It's everything that's wrong with television and with America in general. You don't taint yourself with such offal. You choose your friends carefully. They are all well-read or at least fluent in important pop-culture hallmarks. You can have deep discussions with them about white privilege or *Pet Sounds*. You all try to buy sustainable, humane meat products. You will only buy your eyeglass frames in Hayes Valley.

Yes, things were going just fine in your universe until that fateful day you heard your pal say, "Well, I gotta split. *The Bachelor* is on tonight." Why in the hell, you must be asking yourself, are seemingly intelligent people into that show?



Let me try to explain. I shall call this The Elitist's Guide to *The Bachelor*. I can't promise that I will turn you, but at least you will go away with a greater understanding of our subculture.

First of all, like good literature or drama, the themes on the show are Shakespearean: backstabbing, cuckoldry, vanity, romance, and revenge, all with bikinis and bear-chested machismo. It's *A Midsummer Night's Wet Dream*. We root for the underdogs and hiss at the villains, an armchair Greek Chorus of millions.

Take last week, when a girl on the show named Victoria made a spectacle of herself in front of Juan Pablo, El Bachelor. When faced with several other beautiful, confident women all vying for a chance to one day transmit their mitochondrial DNA with the ex-soccer pro, she did what any normal person would do: She drank herself silly. She then told the camera that she was going to straddle him, because "life was about straddling people ... and things." Then she collapsed in a sobbing ball next to a toilet in the bathroom. Frailty, thy name is woman!

The evil voyeur in me wanted to laugh at her, but I had to be honest with myself: If I were in her shoes, the evening would have gone just about the same way. I have no idea how all these women have so much confidence, let alone the balls to seduce a dude on TV. They are all phonies, to quote Holden Caulfield (I knew you would like that!); the only real people on the show usually crash and burn. She was the ultimate underdog, the Mimi in *La Bohéme*, bravely facing The Beautiful People in the face of consumption (or in Victoria's case, possible alcoholism).

Another huge theme on *The Bachelor* that keeps me coming back is the Shakespearean idea of disguise. Characters on the show — and make no mistake, that's all anyone is in this franchise — often pretend to be someone they are not. One guy even went so far on *The Bachelorette* as to wear a Mardi Gras-style mask for the first two episodes, the Phantom of the Soap Opera. The producers were kind enough to play an organ fugue every time he entered a scene. He said he didn't want to be judged for his looks, but just like when KISS decided to unmask themselves, we were all underwhelmed by his real mug, to put it kindly, and were left wishing he would have kept us in suspense.

But those are all literal disguises. Every season there is a prime manipulator who is one way with the Bachelor and another with everyone else — Rosencrantz and Guildenstern wrapped up in a bouncy, tight-bodded she-vector of sex. This is why I keep coming back to the show. Watching someone be that artful is fascinating. Will the Bachelor find out before it's too late? Will other contestants set aside their own yearnings for him and risk it all by telling him that the object of his affection is a straight-up lying-ass ho? The answer to these questions is always "yes," but invariably, the Bachelor always ignores the advice and goes ahead with the wrong woman anyway. It's not until his family shows up, the Wise Counsel, and reveals to him the error of his ways that he changes his mind, if ever. "Oh Brad," says his mom, "she's not one of *those* girls, is she? The one that none of the other girls like?"

Lord, what fools these mortals be.

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G.B.F.
Rated R. Opens Friday at the Metreon.

Precariously adding a gay male protagonist to its acknowledged amalgam of teen-comedy tropes, *G.B.F.* gets steadier as it gathers momentum. Picture a cartoonishly colorful high school where a trio of prom-queen contenders do bitchy battle to acquire that ultimate fashion accessory, the "gay best friend." Somehow the only candidate is our unassuming narrator, Tanner (Michael J. Willett), accidentally outed via hookup app by his swishy yet still-closeted bestie, Brent (Paul Iacono). Expectedly, Tanner falls out with Brent but falls in with brassy blonde Fawcett (Sasha Pieterse), drama-club diva Caprice (Xosha Roquemore), and prissy Mormon 'Shley (Andrea Bowen), whose collective makeover-montage attention inevitably goes to his head. Politically gentle but winningly averse to any kind of piety, writer George Northy and director Darren Stein make sure to practice equal-opportunity mockery and, eventually, mercy. Their implied plea to normalize coming out as just another coming of age seems generous, if simplistic, just as Megan Mullally seems funny but in her comfort zone as Brent's too-eagerly supportive mom. No amount of catty, witty wordplay can quite make up for creaky sitcomish contrivance, so the movie strains itself even at its most brisk. But especially in light of closing-credits outtakes suggesting a good time was had by all, the takeaway is its sweetness. ***Jonathan Kiefer***

The Last Match
Not rated. Opens Friday at the Opera Plaza.

Without ever quite edging into porn, Antonio Hens's slum-drama *The Last Match* offer more smooth twink flesh and bareback action than you're likely to find without ponying up for an account on NakedSword.com. Yosvani (Milton Garcia) and Reinier (Reinier Diaz) are best friends living in the slums of Havana; while both are involved with women to varying degrees, they're also aware of how hot the other boy is, and finally giving in to their mutual lust doesn't make life any easier for Yosovani's relationship with his gangster father-in-law Silvano (Luis Alberto Garcia), whose "This world isn't made for faggots!" bluster is as much a matter of keeping up appearances as anything else. Mixing elements from Marcel Rasquin's *Hermano* and Sally El Hosaini's *My Brother the Devil* — without the characters actually being brothers, gay incest being a taboo not likely to be broken anytime soon — *The Last Match* presents a world in which such open displays of queerness are becoming accepted as a part of life (Reinier works as a male hustler to support his family), but, c'mon, could you just keep it to yourself? While *The Last Match* doesn't break much ground as a social-issues film, it's a good excuse to show lots of delicious (and legal) Cuban boy flesh, and maybe that's enough. ***Sherilyn Connelly***

Time Will Tell

SF Sketchfest elevates the cornball of yesteryear to the classic of today.

Like Snapchats, sketch comedies sometimes benefit from vanishing right after being seen: It was live before your eyes, and then it was gone forever, and maybe that's for the best. So, by trying to harness that fleeting essence in motion-picture form, are we bottling the lightning or just snuffing it out? To geek out on this and related questions is but one great privilege afforded by our 13th annual SF Sketchfest, whose proceedings include all manner of motion-picture comedy and public conversations with the people who make it.

Some movies and shows actually gain funniness from permanence, by accumulating cultural familiarity. Or so we hope, going into screenings commemorating the 10th anniversary of ***Napoleon Dynamite*** (7 p.m. Jan. 23 at the Castro), the 20th anniversary of ***Cabin Boy*** (7:30 p.m. Feb. 7 at the Castro), and the 30th anniversaries of ***Top Secret!*** (1 p.m. Feb. 8 at the Castro) and ***Revenge of the Nerds*** (8:30 p.m. Feb. 8 at the Castro), not to mention other arguably timeless throwbacks like 2001's ***Super Troopers*** (10 p.m. Feb. 1 at the Roxie) and the original Alan Arkin version of ***The In-Laws***, from 1979 (7 p.m. Feb. 6 at the Castro, with Arkin in attendance).

It's still fun to wonder how improv works within scripted parameters, how audience-accustomed performers will seem on-screen, and how the results of their efforts will stand the test of time. As any subscriber to **Brent Weinbach**'s YouTube videos or **James Urbaniak**'s Vines can tell you, it's also fun to see firsthand how new moviemaking technology has democratized hilarity. Both of those guys are booked for multiple Sketchfest appearances, by the way, and there's also **"Say Hello to My Little Funny,"** a collection of short films made by stand-up comedians (8 p.m. Jan. 28 at Cobb's Comedy Club). Purists, take comfort: It's still live, as long as the audience is.

For nearly overwhelming details, visit sfsketchfest.com. ***JK***

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ONGOING

American Hustle Trying to set a somber drama against faithful re-creations of the inherently funny fashions and interior designs of the late 1970s would be tough, so it's a good thing that David O. Russell's *American Hustle* is played as a comedy. The picture follows a New York con man (Christian Bale) and his partner in scam (Amy Adams) as they're recruited by an ambitious FBI agent (Bradley Cooper) to bust crooked politicians, particularly a New Jersey mayor (Jeremy Renner). There's a lot of *Goodfellas* in the DNA, including dueling narrations, an ear-candy soundtrack full of the moribund music of the '70s, and a De Niro cameo, but *American Hustle* is ultimately about America finding its post-Watergate identity. This is symbolized by the amount of time the main characters spend working on their appearance — indeed, the key to the film's themes may be in the hair regimens — and the cast is clearly having a ball, playing broadly pitched Long Islanders who speak with their hands while gnawing on the scenery. If you listen closely, you can hear traces of Bale's infamous "Oh, good for you!" rant from the set of *Terminator: Salvation*, and it's also refreshing to see Renner invested in his character, giving *American Hustle* all the fucks he did not give *Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters*. (S.C.)

Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues It took nearly a decade for the legend to continue, but here it is, re-uniting director Adam McKay, producer Judd Apatow, and stars Will Ferrell, Steve Carell, David Koechner, and Paul Rudd, who this time shall all buffoonishly negotiate the burgeoning cable news scene of New York City in the 1980s. After an ego-bruising split with his partner (Christina Applegate) and subsequent bottoming out, Ferrell's Ron Burgundy relocates his mojo via a graveyard-shift broadcast of common-denominator-lowering infotainment. This brings new rivalries with a professional nemesis played by James Marsden and a domestic one played by Greg Kinnear, not to mention a pitifully failed attempt at "breaking down the barriers of race by assimilation" with his new producer (Meagan Good). Fittingly, it all climaxes with a cacophonous, cameo-filled brawl between anchor teams from increasingly esoteric cable-TV territories. Like its predecessor, the movie has its share of inspired lunacy and quotable quips, plus some retrospective leisure-suited satire of what 24-hour news hath wrought on America. (At the very least, it hath wrought a culture in which promotion for this film all but requires a string of surreal stunt appearances by an in-character Ferrell on real news broadcasts.) It's all tied together, of course, by the requisite narration from golden-throated veteran newsman Bill Kurtis. (J.S.)

August: Osage County Testing an idea that every unhappy family is histrionic in its own way, John Wells directs Tracy Letts' adaptation of his own prize-studded 2007 play. Here's what happens when a venomous, painkiller-addled matriarch (Meryl Streep) and her three willful adult daughters (Julia Roberts, Juliette Lewis, Julianne Nicholson) reluctantly reconvene in their stuffy Oklahoma homestead: The place boils over with scandalous family secrets, bellicose recriminations, and possible Oscar nominations. Owing much to the dysfunctional-family tradition of Great American dramaturgy — it seems worth noting that Letts himself has performed in Edward Albee's boozy matrimonial melee *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* on Broadway — the *August: Osage County* movie teeters precipitously close to a camp catastrophe, only then to disappoint by maintaining unneeded respectability. Wells' cinematic strategy seems mostly to be a matter of preserving the source play, and Streep's mondo performance in particular, for posterity; this tactful approach is not unprecedented (see also: 2008's *Doubt*) and not without rewards, but it is unsatisfying. (Even if a more aggressive or imaginative film-language translation might just as easily have backfired or violated the material.) Co-stars Margo Martindale, Chris Cooper, Abigail Breslin, Dermot Mulroney, and Sam Shepard acquit themselves well, while Ewan McGregor and Benedict Cumberbatch seem unfortunately more confined by their roles than flattered. They all seem happy, though, to share the unhappiness. If the movie never quite gets over having derived from the play, it does at least give the cast a safe space to do its bawling and brawling. (J.K.)

The Girls in the Band Judy Chaikin's documentary *The Girls in the Band* explores the evolution of female jazz and big-band instrumentalists and their battles with sexism and racism from the 1930s through the present day, paralleling the emergence of feminism. The surviving women describe how the male musicians could be as schlumpy as they wanna be, but women often couldn't get work if they weren't deemed sufficiently pretty, and few men took them seriously as musicians at all. Of course, not much has really changed in today's Top 40, in which a woman's youth and sex appeal are considered more marketable than her talent — though it's notable that as rock 'n' roll displaced jazz in the popular consciousness, more opportunities ultimately opened up for women, allowing them to prosper based on their talent rather than their fuckability. The Women's Liberation movement of the 1970s is also cited as a turning point, giving them the confidence and wherewithal to pursue their musical ambitions in spite of resistance from men. But *The Girls in the Band* is by no means dry or academic; it's joyous and packed with great music, much of which is not as familiar as it should be, since the fact that these female bands and performers never got their due is the point. (SC)

Inside Llewyn Davis Given its title and its makers, the Coen brothers' new movie might conceivably be a 105-minute proctology joke, but actually it's an incisive, melancholy drama, with some funny bits, about the burgeoning folk-music scene in early-1960s New York. (The very fine 1963 album *Inside Dave Van Ronk* is a clear inspiration here.) Oscar Issac plays the eponymous anti-hero, a true but willful talent who won't compromise, and this wintry week-in-the-life tracks him up and down Manhattan and halfway across the country as he struggles toward a personally acceptable version of success. It's a cautionary tale, but not condescending, and all the more moving for it; the Coens can be so good when they just get over themselves. The music is consistently fine, the design details expertly observed, and Isaac seems exquisitely situated between standout supporting performances by Carey Mulligan as a fellow scenester and combative lover, John Goodman as a bloviating jazzman, and F. Murray Abraham as a Chicago impresario. Mulligan's character in particular deserves a fuller arc than she gets, and some scenes' intentions seem fuzzy, but the filmmakers get away with that because it's all done with such extraordinary, experience-abetted confidence — and sincerity, which is nice, and a relief, to see from them. (J.K.)

Lone Survivor As if to atone for his 2012 debacle *Battleship*, Peter Berg's *Lone Survivor* is the kind of testosterone-drenched war movie your dad probably liked to watch on Saturday afternoons. Based on a highly disputed book about what the film's poster touts as "True acts of courage," *Lone Survivor* pits four Navy SEALs against the Taliban in a lush section of Afghanistan. It's no secret that Mark Wahlberg is the title character, and he and his bros Taylor Kitsch, Emile Hirsch, and Ben Foster take an endless amount of abuse — including repeated tumbles down rocky hills, sequences just begging for the "Yakety Sax" treatment — while managing to kill bad guys with one shot, before getting their own artistically back-lit deaths. It's the military equivalent of torture porn, and Berg spends the first act making sure we love these lugs with the wonderful mugs now more than ever. He even includes a shimmering Explosions in the Sky score that evokes Berg's great *Friday Night Lights* television series, as does the presence of Kitsch and the reprise of Lights' motivational "full heart" mantra. Unfortunately, *Lone Survivor* will probably be a great recruitment tool, full of *totally*-not-homoerotic male bonding (their stateside girlfriends are nags) while ignoring big questions of whether we should be in Afghanistan at all. (S.C.)

The Nut Job World cinema takes a weird turn with Peter Lepeniotis' animated *The Nut Job*, a Canadian-Korean co-production partially funded by state-run South Korean banks as well as their Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism. It's an odd pedigree for a story about a loner squirrel (the quintessentially American Will Arnett) organizing a heist of a nut shop to feed his metropolitan park's denizens for the winter, and the underwhelming final product feels like a patch job. While the *Incredibles*-lite rendition of a 1930s American city is nicely detailed, down to the humans speaking in Damon Runyan-style slang, *The Nut Job*'s attempt to evoke that particular time and place makes the well-publicized closing cameo by Psy leading the cast in "Gangnam Style" all the more cynical, since it couldn't possibly have less to do with the movie that preceded it. Other hints of the opposing forces at work include a curious subplot about the need for the rule of law (take that, Kim Jong-Un!) nestling uncomfortably against the fart jokes. There are hints of a more satisfying version of *The Nut Job* in pantomime sequences where the animals don't speak, even though it would mean sacrificing the welcome vocal work of Maya Rudolph — also the MVP of last year's *Turbo*, which is looking better and better. (SC)

The Square Jehane Noujaim's documentary won the audience award at last year's Sundance before she'd even finished it. But then, the revolution it records wasn't yet finished either. An essential chronicle of the recent and very rocky political history of Cairo's Tahrir Square, Noujaim's project proceeds with the clear-eyed understanding that the public ouster of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarek in 2011 really was just the beginning. Getting deep inside the chaos, *The Square* frames a cross-section of its participants, whose actions and eloquent appraisals Noujaim and her brave crew collect. These subjects include Ahmed Hassan, an energetic and passionate young activist; actor Khalid Abdalla, the star of *The Kite Runner* and a de facto English spokesperson for the revolutionaries; and Magdy Ashour, a politically conflicted member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Of the three, Hassan seems most to enjoy or at least to sense an opportunity in having a camera pointed at him, whereas the professional performer Abdalla treats even his most off-the-cuff appearances with the solemnity of duty. (It's the latter who observes, "The battle is not rocks and stones. The battle is in the images.") Meanwhile Ashour, who was tortured under Mubarek and now sometimes is taunted by his secular friends, politely embodies the tormented soul of an entire society. Noujaim's film rousingly reveals that the maintenance of hope for a sustainably democratic Egypt requires, above all, tirelessness — of the activists, and of the filmmaker herself. (JK)


The Nut Job

FILM SHOWTIMES

Arthouse listings compiled by John Graham.
To submit a listing (at least 10 days before issue date), e-mail film@sfweekly.com.

Artists' Television Access. *Screaming Queens*: Documentary about the 1966 Compton's Cafeteria riot directed by Susan Stryker and Victor Silverman. Sat., Jan. 25, 8 p.m. $7. 992 Valencia, San Francisco, 824-3890, www.atasite.org.

The Castro Theatre. *Napoleon Dynamite* 10th Anniversary: All-star film tribute with Jon Heder, Jon Gries, and Efren Ramirez live in person. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Thu., Jan. 23, 7 p.m. $25. sfsketchfest.com. Noir City: 12th Annual San Francisco Film Noir Festival: Eddie Muller and his partners in cinematic crime return with another stark reminder that the "good old days" had plenty of bad apples to go around. This year the festival goes global — featuring post-WWII noirs from Argentina, France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Mexico, Norway, and Spain — for those who prefer their femmes fatales with a foreign accent. Jan. 24-Feb. 4. $10-$120. noircity.com. 429 Castro, San Francisco, 621-6120, www.castrotheatre.com.

Chabot Space & Science Center. Bay Area International Children's Film Festival: A "playdate for the imagination" that includes feature films, short films, animation workshops, music, and more. Jan. 25-26, 10 a.m. $7-$25. 10000 Skyline, Oakland, 510-336-7300, www.chabotspace.org.

Clay Theatre. *The Past* (*Le Passé*): A new dramatic mystery from Oscar-winning Iranian director Asghar Farhadi (*A Separation*). Daily. *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*: The Bawdy Caste performs onstage while the ultimate cult film plays in the background. Last Saturday of every month, 11:59 p.m. $9-$10. 2261 Fillmore St., San Francisco, 267-4893, www.landmarktheatres.com/Market/SanFrancisco/SanFrancisco_Frameset.htm.

Cobb's Comedy Club. Say Hello to My Little Funny: A Night of Short Films Made by Comedians: Includes films by Lily Tomlin, Bill Burr, T.J. Miller, Grant Lyon, Mike Lemcke, Anita Dreiseberg, Anna Seregina, Brent Weinbach, and more. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Tue., Jan. 28, 8 p.m. $15. sfsketchfest.com. 915 Columbus, San Francisco, 928-4320, www.cobbscomedy.com.

Dark Room Theater. Bad Movie Night: *The Last Man on Earth*: Hosts Jim Fourniadis, Sherilyn Connelly, and Mikl-Em take a look back at the 1964 movie that did a disservice to Richard Matheson's novel *I Am Legend* a full four decades before Will Smith got the chance. Sun., Jan. 26, 8 p.m. $6.99. 2263 Mission, San Francisco, 401-7987, www.darkroomsf.com.

Embarcadero Center Cinema. *Dallas Buyers Club*: Matthew McConaughey continues his run of challenging roles in this true-life tale of a 1980s Texas cowboy who's diagnosed as HIV positive. Daily. *Philomena*: Irish dramedy starring Dame Judi Dench and Steve Coogan and directed by Stephen Frears. Daily. *Inside Llewyn Davis*: Oscar Isaac occupies the title role in this Coen Brothers film about a Greenwich Village folkie set in the early '60s. Daily. *12 Years a Slave*: Chiwetel Ejiofor, Michael Fassbender, Benedict Cumberbatch, and Brad Pitt star in director Steve McQueen's powerful drama set in antebellum America. Daily. *Nebraska*: Bruce Dern and Will Forte star in a Midwestern road movie shot in black-and-white by director Alexander Payne (*The Descendants*, *Sideways*). Daily. *The Invisible Woman*: Ralph Fiennes stars in and directs this biopic about Charles Dickens' midlife love affair with a teenage girl who must remain secret. Daily. 1 Embarcadero Center, San Francisco, 267-4893, www.landmarktheatres.com/market/SanFrancisco/EmbarcaderoCenterCinema.htm.

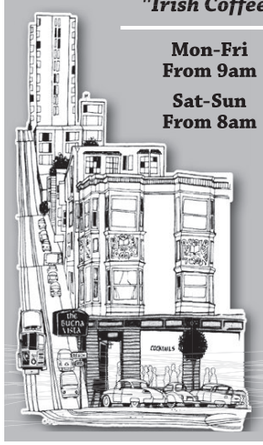
Exploratorium. Saturday Cinema: Weekly thematic film screenings presented in the Kanbar Forum by the Exploratorium's Cinema Arts program. Saturdays. Free with museum admission. Pier 15, San Francisco, 528-4444, www.exploratorium.edu.

Jewish Community Center of San Francisco. Mark Cantor's Giants of Jazz on Film: Treasures from the Archive: Includes performance clips of Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, and more. Sat., Jan. 25, 8 p.m. $25. 3200 California, San Francisco, 292-1200, www.jccsf.org.

Opera Plaza Cinemas. *Blue Is the Warmest Color*: French coming-of-age love story (based on the cult graphic novel) that won the Palme d'Or at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival. Daily. *Blue Jasmine*: Woody Allen's latest dramatic comedy, set in San Francisco and starring the inimitable Cate Blanchett. Daily. *The Girls in the Band*: Judy Chaikin's documentary explores the evolution of female jazz instrumentalists and their battles with sexism and racism from the 1930s through the present day, paralleling the emergence of feminism. Daily. *The Great Beauty*: Fellini-esque Italian drama directed by Paolo Sorrentino. Daily. *The Last Match (La Partida)*: The friendship between two male soccer players becomes something more intimate in this new Cuban drama. Jan. 24-30. 601 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco, 777-3456, www.landmarktheatres.com/market/SanFrancisco/OperaPlazaCinema.htm.

Roxie Theater. *The Square*: Academy Award-nominated documentary about the Arab Spring uprisings in Egypt. Through Jan. 24. *A Touch of Sin*: Four characters discover the downside of China's surging capitalist society in this new drama from *Still Life* director Jia Zhangke. Through Jan. 23. Sundance Short Films: A collection of eight short films from the 2013 Sundance Film Festival. Through Jan. 22. Ruth's Table Benefit: Screenings of the documentary films *Ruth Asawa: Roots of an Artist* and *Hearing Voices: The Ruth's Table Story*. Thu., Jan. 23, 6:30 p.m. $30. *Platonov, or The Disinherited*: The San Francisco Film Society presents Jay Scheib's filmic interpretation of a lost old Anton Chekhov play. Fri., Jan. 24, 5 p.m. SFFS Youth Filmmaker Showcase: Short films produced by the San Francisco Film Society's Youth Education program. Sat., Jan. 25, noon. On Cinema: *Wired*: Screening of the 1989 John Belushi biopic with hosts Tim Heidecker and Gregg Turkington. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Sat., Jan. 25, noon. $20. sfsketchfest.com. Totally Looped: Old movies get hilarious new dialogue thanks to Dan Castellaneta, Keegan-Michael Key, Deb Lacusta, Joe Liss, Rick Overton, Angela V. Shelton, and Gary Anthony Williams. Presented by SF Sketchfest. Sat., Jan. 25, 4 p.m.; Sun., Jan. 26, 4 p.m. $25. sfsketchfest.com. Moving Portraits: Films & Short Works by Mike Mills: SFMOMA presents screenings of Mills' films *Beginners* and *A Mind Forever Voyaging Through Strange Seas of Thought Alone: Silicon Valley Project*. Sun., Jan. 26, 7 p.m. $7-$10. sfmoma.org/events/2397. *The Act of Killing*: Filmmaker Joshua Oppenheimer makes a personal appearance to introduce this screening of his Academy Award-nominated documentary about death squads. Tue., Jan. 28, 7 p.m. 3117 16th St., San Francisco, 863-1087, www.roxie.com.

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This Tastes Funny

I went in hoping for a good meal at a comedy club. The joke was on me.

By Anna Roth



Chicken fingers at Cobb's look better than they taste.

SF Weekly

There used to be certain situations where being fussy about your food put you at a disadvantage. Sporting events. Airports. Movie theaters. Concerts. Places where the cost of food had nothing to do with the quality, places where you resigned yourself to an evening of deep-fried mediocrity.

But following the rise of foodie America, the past decade or so has seen improvements across the board, and it's now possible to stay in a delicious, locally sourced bubble wherever you go. In the Bay Area alone, celeb chef Michael Mina is installing a restaurant at the new 49ers stadium in Santa Clara; last fall, AT&T Park announced that a new edible garden will supply produce for the park's concessions. Terminals 2 and 3 at SFO are filled with culinary bright spots, including restaurants from the likes of Tyler Florence to gifts from food incubator La Cocina. Austin's Alamo Drafthouse, a wonderful movie theater/restaurant combo, is supposed to come to the Mission later this year, and City Winery, a wine bar/restaurant/music venue from the founder of the Knitting Factory, is moving into the Napa Opera House this spring.

There is one area, however, where the food remains reliably shitty: the city's comedy clubs.

Specifically at Cobb's Comedy Club, one of San Francisco's two major venues (the other, Punchline, shares the same owners). I went in hoping for food that was bad-good — an excuse to binge on chicken fingers and french fries while watching funny people say funny things. But the food I encountered was bad-bad — so bad, in fact, that most of the food ordered remained on the plate, untouched after a few bites. What surprised me was that I was so surprised by it — evidence of how far the gourmet movement has reached into the corners of America.

Entertainment and dinner are an uneasy combination. Dinner theater, at least the act of listening to or watching something while eating food, has been around in some form for probably all of human history, but its modern incarnation peaked around the mid-20th century. But then, people lost interest, performers went to TV, and venue owners realized that they could make more money on foods like fries and popcorn, which require fairly untrained workers to produce and can be sold for far more profit than your average restaurant dish. For a lot of venues that have survived on the basic concession model in the past, retrofitting a kitchen for restaurant food, hiring a chef, and training a staff to offer good service requires a lot of investment.

So, I wouldn't blame Cobb's for continuing to serve crowd-pleasing, notably non-gourmet cuisine — there's a spectrum for food of all genres, and if the dishes served there had been even passable, this review would have told a different story. The problem was that the Cobb's menu was overlong and striving to be more than it needed to be, thus executing nothing very well. On the pricey dinner menu, marsala chicken sat along a steak sandwich, and any attempts beyond the basics proved to be basically inedible. The "Wing Trio" was a sad assortment of flaccid chicken bits coated in three different sauces (garlic, chipotle, and "Asian"), each worse than the last. A steak sandwich was all gristle; it was advertised on the menu as an open-faced sandwich on sourdough, but the tough meat came enclosed between a barely toasted, insubstantial white bun.

Chicken fingers ("Love Me Chicken Tenders" on the menu) were inoffensive only because they tasted like nothing, save for the slightest aftertaste of rancid frying oil. (It must be noted that the seasoned chicken strips at the Metreon movie theater, which no doubt go from the freezer to the deep-fryer, are markedly better.) The french fries suffered from the same bad-cooking-oil aftertaste. The best thing I tried was a Caesar salad, which was about on par with those make-your-own kits you buy at the grocery store. A quesadilla at the next table looked pretty good and I wished I'd ordered it instead of all the fancy stuff, which got me wondering: If a quesadilla is potentially the height of the kitchen's powers, why bother with anything more ambitious?

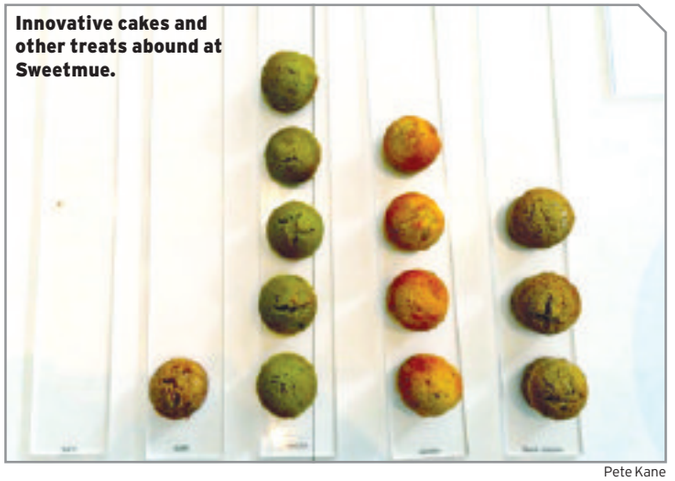
It's not like the room demands fine dining. The place has a sort of unfinished, rec room feel when you walk in, and the cocktail menu, the real fuel of the place, is straight out of the '90s — too-sweet drinks made with flavored vodkas with punny names like the Cobbsmopolitan. Cocktail waitresses seemed harried, as though they had too many tables to manage, and we took to ordering drinks whenever we saw ours even if we weren't done with our current one, because we weren't sure when she'd be back.

It seems absurd now, looking back, that I'd expected a good dinner — the action's up on stage, after all, and you don't go to a comedy club for the food — but that's just where we are in 2014 San Francisco. Maybe venues like the Dark Room and the "Cynic Cave" in the basement of Lost Weekend Video have it right by offering a selection of the finest candy bars and chips the corner store offers, neatly sidestepping the nightmare of the kitchen. As it was, I sat in the dark longing for the culinary prowess of Butter, the SoMa bar that traffics in grocery-store jalapeño poppers, mozzarella sticks, and other deep-fried delights. Foodie culture may be one long-running joke, but we've all got to get in on it eventually — or else become the brunt of it.

Anna.Roth@SFWeekly.com

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Pete Kane

EAT FRESH EATS

The Mission's Best Bakery You've Never Heard Of

By Pete Kane

It was very coy of Sweetmue Baked Goods to be open for months while barely telling a soul. But the world has found them. A tiny, brilliantly white shop on a leafy bit of 22nd Street just off Guerrero, it might be the Mission's most isolated commercially zoned spot, but its Asian-inspired classic French pastries were never going to be anonymous for long.

More to the point, let's just say that (pastry) muscles get flexed in here. Beyond the matcha roulade with black sesame paste, frangipane with red wine-poached pears, and the mini galette des rois, there are also savory turnovers (ham and cheese, or mushroom, leek, and truffle salt). And there are clever touches: Sweetmue bakes not only its own macarons (black sesame and jasmine tea among them) but also its own macaroons, as in the coconut cookies your mom still mixes up with the other thing. Rounding out the offerings are Gimme! Coffee and tea by Teance — and also oat-based, gluten-free doggie treats at $4 a bag.

One thing to keep in mind: Sweetmue closes at the decidedly early hour of 10 a.m. Tuesday. through Thursday. Also, if you get there early enough to snag one, a salted caramel ganache tart with just the right amount of sea salt does present a slight problem for the beardier members of the human race, but gooeyness should never be a deterrent to an enjoyable afternoon confection.

Sweetmue Baked Goods
3414 22nd St.

Options Running Out for Drakes Bay Oyster Co.

By Anna Roth

Drakes Bay Oyster Company is still fighting for the right to stay open in Drakes Estero near Point Reyes, but last week brought »p34

RECENT OPENERS

A weekly listing of new dining spots around town. To recommend a place, e-mail fresheats@sfweekly.com.

Bun Mee: The Fillmore banh mi shop opens a second location in the Financial District, offering Franco-Vietnamese sandwiches, salads, and fish and chips with red curry and sweet potato fries. *650 Market, 800-7696, bunmee.co.*

Mazza Luna: This Lebanese extension of Hayes Valley's Mazzat serves up shawarma and other Mediterranean specialties in a stylish, gray-hued cafe. *810 Van Ness, 829-2730, mazzaluna.com.*

Super Duper Burger: The seventh location of this popular burger chain has opened in the FiDi near the Embarcadero. Expect the usual menu of Niman Ranch burgers, free-range chicken sandwiches, Straus milkshakes, and local beer and wine. *98 Mission, 974-1200, superdupersf.com.*

Three Twins: Two years after the Haight/Fillmore scoop shop was destroyed in a fire, the organic, innovative ice cream store is back with 12 flavors, ice cream sandwiches, and pints-to-go. *254 Fillmore, 487-8946, threetwinsicecream.com.*

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Fresh Eats from p33

another blow to its legal battle. In a 2-1 decision on Jan. 14, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rejected the oyster company's appeal for a rehearing on a previous decision: the court's September 2013 ruling to uphold a decision made in November 2012 by then-Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar to not renew the oyster farm's lease and let Drakes Estero return to nature.

The twists and turns in that last sentence echo the complications of this case overall. Basically if you're just tuning in, all you need to know is this: Drakes Bay Oyster Company is one of the biggest oyster producers in California and the only canning facility left in the state. It happens to be on land owned by the government, purchased as part of Point Reyes National Seashore in 1972. With the purchase came a 40-year lease for the farm, the only commercial business on the 2,500-acre estuary, which is home to harbor seals and migrating birds. By declining to renew the lease, Salazar set aside the land to become a "marine wilderness," the highest level of government protection for land.

Last week's decision is another big win for environmental groups who want to see the establishment of a marine wilderness, the first of its kind on the West Coast, and who believe that letting a commercial business operate on government-protected land could set a dangerous loophole for big business to exploit. But local food advocates like Alice Waters have protested the decision all along, on the grounds that the farm isn't harming the natural environment and its closure would eliminate a major source of local oysters for the Bay Area.

Legal options are running out for the farm, though Drakes Bay Oyster Company owner Kevin Lunny says that he plans to take the case to the Supreme Court. A decision in favor of the oyster company by the highest court in the land could reframe our definitions of "wilderness" and "environmentalism," forging a way for local food and preservation efforts to work hand-in-hand.

But that decision might come too late to save this particular slice of mariculture. Drakes will need to get another court order to stay open during the appeal, and if it closes, it will likely never reopen — not only would its closure put a few dozen employees out of a job, but it would also destroy thousands of dollars worth of oyster stock in the water. Until then, you can still visit the farm, order a dozen oysters on the half shell, slurp them at a picnic table next to the estuary, and forget about the complexities of the legal system ... for a few hours at least.

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Drinking Alone, Together

I came to Tonight Soju Bar because I don't know a damn thing about soju. Or much about Korea. You can learn a lot about another culture by what it drinks recreationally. But that doesn't mean you will.

Despite having the word "bar" in its name, Tonight Soju is a restaurant pretending to be a bar. The curse of my existence. Only one page of the four-page menu is devoted to drinks. The bar itself is a tiny thing in the back of the room, where no one sits. Instead, the space is reserved for restaurant-style seating. Worse from the point of view of a solitary drinker: The tables are often divided from each other by fabric, so it's difficult to interact with your neighbors. I was on my own.

Tonight Soju is a restaurant for people who like soju, not for people who want to learn about it. There aren't a variety of sojus there to choose from — you can't have a flight or sample different bottles. As the very nice waitress went out of her way to explain to me, all the soju is made on premises in specifically sized batches, and so you buy it by the batch. It generally comes in metal tea kettles, and a kettle of soju contains about 10 shots. A soju/fruit juice mix (pineapple, peach, raspberry ...) generally contains about 15 shots. The house specialty is soju served in a small watermelon: twice the servings, and if you manage to finish them all your refill is half-off.

Again, it's a terrible system for a lone drinker — but it's not designed for lone drinkers. The assumption is that people will come in groups and drink together.

The assumption wasn't wrong; I was just out of place. Everybody else there was part of a group, and they all seemed to be celebrating, clinking glasses, taking pictures. "He's Mr. Dildo!" shouted a man at the table to my right. "Take a picture with the dildo!" I looked over, but saw nothing held other than their glasses, and a picture was snapped of a perfectly ordinary toast.

The table to my left was using an iPad to play a drinking game — a whole new frontier that I had never considered. Finally, a reason to get one. Unless the game is available on my phone.

Americans generally think of bars as catering to lone drop-ins off the street, wearing trench coats, with stories to tell, but WASP culture is highly unusual in its emphasis on personal privacy and distance. In India I kept running into locals who were deeply worried about the way I'd sit by myself. In Cuba I was invited to the homes of locals who were concerned that I didn't have a group. In Russia, in Colombia ... to varying degrees, my assertion that I just wanted to sit alone and nurse a drink until I was ready to talk to people was rejected as unhealthy in all of these places.

They're not wrong. But in America, where we are so often alone, how are we going to go drink with people if bars don't connect us with other solitary folk?

The soju tasted strongly of alcohol, but has about half the ABV of vodka — so I drank a lot of it. The chicken wings were delicious, and the spicy garlic ribs first burned my tongue literally, then figuratively. Altogether it was a good combination. Worth sharing.

The table to my right disintegrated into a vicious, if funny, argument over how to pay the check. "Mr. Dildo" appeared to have left early. The table to my left also began arguing: The drinking game demanded that two of them change shirts, but it was a girl and a guy and she didn't want to. I smirked: The last time I demanded that a girl and a guy change tops at a bar, they did it without a moment's pause.

That was in Colorado, if you're wondering. At a very different bar, on a night after which — if memory serves — every couple present soon broke up. I met a woman who claimed to be some kind of doomed psychic, and she gave me a very important message while insisting that I would never remember it, or her name. She was absolutely right. I have no idea.

That was a party where strangers mingled freely across boundaries. Tonight Soju will probably never see its like: From its architecture to its menu, it's all about delineating who is and isn't in a group, and then getting raucous with your own. But I'd certainly go back, if I had a small crowd and wanted to get a little noisy with booze out of a watermelon.

Tonight Soju Bar
733 Taraval, 564-6400, tonightsoju.com.

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A Trip With Wooden Shjips

What's so powerful about repetition, or about repetition?

Interview by Ian S. Port



Wooden Shjips, with captain/frontman Ripley Johnson at left.

Anna Ignatenko

A Wooden Shjips song can be *"psychedelic" in the original sense: It can alter one's state of mind. The band's sleek rock workouts repeat in a way reminiscent of the Velvet Underground, or even Philip Glass: They are long, lush, undulating landscapes of sound whose cumulative effect is deeply hypnotic. A fuzzy guitar figure recycles into infinity, inducing a trance-like state. Singer and guitarist Ripley Johnson sing-talks distantly, almost unintelligibly, over the blare; occasionally an organ or guitar solo appears over the uniform landscape. The listener feels disoriented, disassociated, a little elated.*

Perhaps this kind of music doesn't sound like a recipe for great commercial success. But Wooden Shjips have done remarkably well since their early days as an S.F. rock band in which every member played an instrument on which he wasn't trained. The band's last album, West, *sold more than 20,000 copies, and has helped elevate the profile of Wooden Shjips worldwide, especially in Europe. Even a decent career in psych-rock, however, does not a posh living make: After spending two years touring with his wife as the electronic outfit Moon Duo — still his full-time pursuit — Johnson recently settled for good in Portland. We caught him in his basement there to talk about the power of repetitive music, the useful inscrutability of his (and Mick Jagger's) lyrics, and Wooden Shjips' excellent, even-more-approachable new album,* Back to Land, *which Chicago label Thrill Jockey recently released. What follows are the edited, compressed highlights of what Johnson told us.*

1. I spent some time trying to figure out what it is about music that I really respond to. There are some things that are so good, and they hit you in such a specific way, and that [trance-like repetition] is just one of the elements for me. It's just a primal thing. It's the heartbeat, it's trying to get back to some sort of womb-like state, where you're in some suspended place where you can not think about things for a little while and just get lost in the music.

2. I still identify that we're an S.F. band in some ways, but when I go back to visit the city sometimes I feel like I hardly know it. It's like seeing an old friend or an ex-girlfriend or something. You feel like, 'Wow, they've changed so much.' But part of that's obviously me changing as well.

3. The loose theme that I noticed [on the new album] was this coming-home sort of feeling. *Back to Land* — obviously being more grounded, and feeling back in a comfortable place, which has to do with me moving into a house here in Portland and feeling at home, getting all my stuff out of boxes.

4. It's weird to just try to pick a place to live. You can't just live where you're used to living. I mean, if we had our way, we would've just moved back to San Francisco to live. We couldn't really afford, it so... We love Portland, and it's a lot cheaper.

5. A lot of [the album's direction] was sort of a looking back, back beyond when the band started, to a lot of original influences in my life musically. Before, I think we may have avoided some of those influences. We're talking about classic rock, mostly. A lot of '70s stuff, '60s stuff. Things like Neil Young, and the Stones and Creedence. At some point you run away from things from your childhood, and then at some point you come back to them. Especially with music, because I think a lot of what you enjoy about music is formed probably pretty early on.

6. We weren't trying to be obscure musically [by initially playing instruments we didn't know]. There was a self-deprecating approach, yes. Part of that comes from being in bands that no one cares about for years. When you're young, you're tough, you can take that, and you play shows for no one and you don't care, or you drink enough that it doesn't matter. You're just having fun. If you've been in bands long enough, you expect to be ignored. You expect that there probably aren't that many people out there into the same exact things that you're into, and the specific things that you're trying to do. But the funny thing about what happened with us is that, you know, the Internet. It used to be that it was really hard to reach people who were into very niche things, and now it's almost too easy.

7. We play bigger shows in Europe, certainly. Mostly. But in the U.S., it's just really different because the U.S. is such a massive country. In Europe you have a lot of cities, and it's easy to get around for the most part. It's hard for us to do it here. In Europe, and I don't know as much in the States, I think there's a desire for rock music. People want to hear real people playing real music, as Prince said once.

8. I grew up a big Stones fan, and I could never understand what Mick Jagger was saying on some of my favorite Stones albums. Like *Exile on Main Street*, I still don't know what he's saying on half the songs. Sometimes I'll be reading something, and a lyric will be revealed to me, and I'll be like, "Oh my God," 'cause I don't try to go and figure out what he's saying, because I don't really care. To me, the voice is just another instrument, and I'm more interested in rhythm and texture and sound.

9. I kind of feel like I'm beyond drugs, like I've done enough drugs that my brain doesn't react the same way. You learn what you do from certain drugs, and then you move on, because there are just diminishing returns. But marijuana for me is nice, it can be inspiring. It's good to take yourself out of your normal routine and your normal way of thinking every once in a while. But I think also you can do that through other means, through meditation, or exercise, or hiking in the woods. Or just having actual new experiences, versus introducing some new chemical into your brain and forcing it.

Wooden Shjips

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Highs and lows from the last week in S.F. music.

SIZZLE

■ **Icee Hot,** one of San Francisco's most forward-looking dance parties, celebrated its fourth birthday with a fantastic night at


Levon Vincent at Icee Hot

Public Works. In the upstairs loft, Floating Points weaved from jazz to Northern Soul, while Joey Anderson enveloped the main room with a subtle, surreal lead-in to Levon Vincent's peak-time explorations.

■ The **Grammy Awards** will take place this Sunday, and a party was held to honor the Bay Area's own nominees, which include Neil Young, Les Claypool, Omar Sosa, and New Age artist Laura Sullivan, among others. Our locals were nominated in 18 categories, many of which won't make it to the telecast. We wish them all luck!

■ **DrumPants exist**, and they are exactly what they sound like: wearable pads that trigger electronic drum sounds, as well as those of other instruments. This means you can now exercise your inner Neal Peart while riding Muni — and since they accept headphones, you don't have to bother your neighbors. They're real and cost $139.99, so the future is bright, y'all.

FIZZLE

■ We thought the age of everyone jumping on the EDM train came and went a couple of years ago. We were wrong: **East Bay indie-rapper A-Plus** has a new album unsubtly titled *Molly's Dirty Water*, and a single whose video trades in all the sensory stimulation you can find outside of an Oracle Arena massive. It's too ineffectual to be terrible, but it's certainly not compelling.

■ We got all excited about **49ers-themed rap anthems** — choosing the best five of the dozens out there — only to find our hopes crushed on Sunday. Sucks that it'll be another year before we can make a go at a sixth ring. But at least we'll have some good songs to play when we finally get it.

■ We all know ***American Idol*** is circling the drain — even if its season premiere last week did grab 15 million viewers — so it was funny and kinda shocking to see how much Harry Connick Jr. lights up the show. Dude told a contestant that he was really Chris Isaak, and he makes jokes about how all anyone ever looks at is Jennifer Lopez. We did not expect this — but it's still not enough to get us watching.

For full versions of the above stories and much more about S.F. music, check out All Shook Down, our music blog, at www.sfweekly.com/shookdown.

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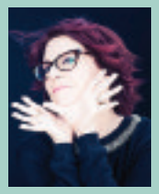
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with Chris Elliott and Adam Resnick, hosted by Peaches Christ
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"NAPOLEON DYNAMITE" 10TH ANNIVERSARY
with Jon Heder, Jon Gries and Efren Ramirez
JANUARY 23RD, 7PM
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Benoit & Sergio

Making Sense of Tech-House

Benoit & Sergio tell stories over a frosty, futuristic hybrid.

By Derek Opperman

Collaborating from Wash- ington, D.C., and Berlin, Benoit & Sergio are a duo who've long defined themselves as operating from a space between. This applies to more than just the distance of its members' hometowns: The music that Benoit Simon and Benjamin "Sergio" Myers make is a hybrid that draws as much from recent dancefloor trends as it does the lyrically dense song craft of '80s pop heroes like Paul Simon and David Byrne. Such a combination makes the style of their output difficult to classify. However, in recent years, a number of journalists, as well as the two themselves, have resorted to utilizing the catch-all signifier of "tech-house," a confusing tag that speaks to the hybridity at the root of their aesthetic.

In the contemporary use of the word, tech-house has become shorthand for a style of slick, high-fidelity dance music often associated with underground labels like Crosstown Rebels, Culprit, and Visionquest. Artists in this vein often share similar production habits, which rely on plunking bass lines, loopy percussion, rushing white noise risers, and, perhaps most importantly, very present vocals that are usually spoken or chanted instead of sung. In the simplest expression possible, it's house music, but with a colder synthetic edge borrowed from the futuristic ethos of techno.

Benoit & Sergio epitomize this school of thought. They're rooted in the new school, and they take advantage of the vocal dimension of the form to craft anthems that manage to retain a distinctive literary sense while hitting hard on the dancefloor. "I feel like if we're going to use words, they might as well tell a story," Myers told Dialogue Incorporated. "There needs to be some hook to the words, the same way there's a hook to the music. Part of the hook to the words is a story or some sort of narrative."

It's easy to understand what he means. Benoit & Sergio tracks feature meandering, yet strangely memorable ruminations that are atypical of your usual club sounds. "Walk and Talk," the group's breakout single from 2011, was a lament of the effects of ketamine on a relationship, with the unlikely sing-along-inducing verse of "My baby does K all day/ She doesn't wash her hair, doesn't wash her clothes/Just sits on the couch watching television shows." On "Adjustments," their latest, they lock in a melancholy groove and take aim at the self-importance of DJ culture: "Sometimes I think that DJs don't understand/That we've been waiting around all week for this." Expect them to keep that close to heart when they perform at Monarch this Saturday.

Lights Down Low presents Benoit and Sergio
10 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 25, at Monarch. $20-$25; monarchsf.com

OTHER WORTHY PARTIES THIS WEEK

120 Minutes presents: DJ Nate at Elbo Room, 10 p.m. Friday, Jan. 24. $10; elbosf.com
Though it's known for birthing house, Chicago is also the hometown of juke, a style of heavily swung, house-indebted dance music that moves in the upper extremes of tempo. Its rise has coincided with its associated dance "footwork," which can best be thought of as breakdancing on speed (and energy drinks). Juke artists rarely perform in San Francisco, which makes the appearance of DJ Nate, a Chi-Town favorite, an experience worth having.

Rock 'n' Roll Workshop with Tony the Tyger at Make-Out Room, 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 24. Free; makeoutroom.com
We don't normally write about happy hours, but in the case of Tony the Tyger, we'll make an exception. He's a legend of the Los Angeles mod scene whose impeccable taste in rare '60s psych and garage rock is echoed in his long-running "Fuzz, Flaykes, & Shakes" compilation series.

Professional Fans presents Jessy Lanza at Amnesia, 9 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 25. $10; amnesiathebar.com
Canadian artist Jessy Lanza strikes a fine balance between '90s R&B nostalgia and the leading edge of electronic music. Her debut, *Pull My Hair Back*, released last year on U.K. imprint Hyperdub, found a way to incorporate the two with a downtempo coolness that's heightened by the smooth contours of Lanza's voice.

As You Like It with Robag Wruhme, andhim, Session Victim at Public Works, 9 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 25. $20-$30; publicsf.com
Considering Robag Whrume has a mix titled "Wuppdeckmischmamplflow," you might imagine him to be some Platonic ideal of a German techno DJ. This is correct: He's one of the country's most loved DJs, with a melodic and minimalistic style that's as approachable as it is cerebral. The rest of this week's edition of As You Like It keeps things German, with a set by fellow techno-heads andhim as well as the more house-leaning Session Victim.

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John Santos

Your Resident Latin Expert

Percussionist and composer John Santos shows his love for Afro-Latin sounds in a new SFJAZZ series.

By Gary Moskowitz

A conversation with John

Santos is like sitting in on a dynamic college course on Afro-Latin music — but there are no lulls and no test afterward. Watch Santos perform live on conga drums with a full band of horn players, singers, and percussionists, and the history lesson becomes tangible and audible. You're likely to hear traditional Cuban folk music, modern interpretations of well-known jazz compositions, mambo, and a lot more. He's easy to spot onstage, too: Look for the signature goatee, short-brimmed hat, and conga drums decorated with the colors of the Puerto Rican flag.

Santos, 58, curates a series of shows this year at the SFJAZZ Center in his role as resident artistic director, with two notable upcoming performances Feb. 8 and March 2. He's a five-time Grammy-nominated native San Franciscan percussionist and composer with 35 years of Afro-Latin music under his belt: not just salsa and Latin jazz but myriad other musical styles with sub-Saharan and Pan-American influences. Santos has shared the stage with Dizzy Gillespie, Tito Puente, Max Roach, and countless others, which has helped turn him into a walking encyclopedia of standard and Latin jazz. He knows when to sound traditional and when to experiment. He'll tune his drums nice and low for traditional Cuban folk songs, and crank them much tighter and higher for more break-neck tempos and louder volume.

In 1976, Carlos Santana hired a then 21-year-old Santos, who was then playing in a local salsa band called La Banda. Two weeks later, he was fired from Santana's band for not having the necessary chops for the gig. "Carlos liked my energy, but I didn't have the equipment to handle that gig at that time," Santos says. "Then my band broke up, so I had no band to come back to. It's been a very adventurous experience since." Losing the Santana gig may have been a blessing in disguise, though. Santos soon formed the Machete Ensemble, which became a prominent Bay Area Latin jazz group, with a career spanning 21 years.

Santos has been affiliated with SFJAZZ for its entire 31 years. In his latest residency, he'll perform eight concerts over the course of the year. "It's a bit nerve-racking, actually," Santos says. "It's a lot of concerts to produce and rehearse, and prepare and pull it off."

A residency at SFJAZZ may be stressful, but it's a blessing for an artist like Santos. His eight shows will all be properly promoted, he and his musicians will be fairly compensated, and they'll perform at a comfortable new venue with an enviable sound system. Santos is well aware that rising rents make it more and more difficult for jazz venues to survive and jazz artists to make a living. "Jazz and salsa and Afro-Cuban music are not commercial. They jumped on it for a minute during *Buena Vista Social Club* [Ry Cooder's 1997 studio album and film about Cuban music], but then moved on to the next thing," Santos says. "The people who truly love it treat it with respect and don't abandon it. We keep the traditions moving forward in any way we can."

Santos' notoriety also stems from his work as an activist and teacher: When the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences eliminated many of its Latin music categories, including Latin jazz, from the Grammy Awards a few years ago, Santos urged fans to join a national boycott of the telecast. The next year, the Latin jazz album category was restored. He's also lectured on the vast historical significance of drumming in Caribbean and Latin American music at San Francisco's Museum of the African Diaspora, served on the Latin Jazz Advisory Committee of the Smithsonian Institute, and is on the faculty at the Jazz School Institute in Berkeley.

Santos could even be called the Wynton Marsalis of Latin jazz. Similar to the way in which Marsalis — the artistic director of jazz at the Lincoln Center in New York City and go-to spokesman on all things jazz — peppers his performances and lectures about jazz with sincerity and wit, Santos speaks about the larger Afro-Latin music diaspora with both earnestness and broad humor. Both men are leading figures in music on a global scale.

"Wynton and his education is a big inspiration for me," Santos says. "The making of music and culture is about passing it down from one generation to the next. Half of what I do is teaching."

The John Santos Sextet

Jan. 18-19, Feb. 8, and March 2 at SFJAZZ Center. Prices and times vary; sfjazz.org.

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CLUBS

WEDNESDAY 1/22

ROCK

Bottom of the Hill: 1233 17th St., San Francisco. Giggle Party, Sweat Lodge, Nasty Christmas, 9 p.m., $8.

Brick & Mortar Music Hall: 1710 Mission, San Francisco. Brave Ulysses, Winnie Christian, 8 p.m., $5-$8.

The Chapel: 777 Valencia St., San Francisco. Black Cobra Vipers, Yesway, Annie Girl & The Flight, 8 p.m., $12.

El Rio: 3158 Mission, San Francisco. Joe Shambeaux & The Doctors, Zbörnak, 8 p.m., $5.

Hemlock Tavern: 1131 Polk, San Francisco. Bad Coyotes, The Shirks, Musk, The Shanghais, 8:30 p.m., $6.

The Knockout: 3223 Mission, San Francisco. Cumstain, That Ghost, Bloom, Sharky Coast, DJ Special Lord B, 9:30 p.m., $6.

Make-Out Room: 3225 22nd St., San Francisco. UFOFBI, White Rainbow, 7:30 p.m., $5.

Milk Bar: 1840 Haight, San Francisco. Bonnie & The Bang Bang, Down Dirty Shake, DonCat, Young Creatures, 8:30 p.m., $5.

Rickshaw Stop: 155 Fell, San Francisco. J.D. Wilkes & The Dirt Daubers, Trainwreck Riders, 8 p.m., $10-$12.

DANCE

The Cafe: 2369 Market, San Francisco. "Sticky Wednesdays," w/ DJ Mark Andrus, 8 p.m., free.

Cat Club: 1190 Folsom, San Francisco. "Bondage A Go Go," w/ DJs Damon, Tomas Diablo, & guests, 9:30 p.m., $5-$10.

Club X: 715 Harrison, San Francisco. "Electro Pop Rocks: EPR-UV," 18+ dance night, 9 p.m., $15-$20.

Edinburgh Castle: 950 Geary, San Francisco. "1964," w/ DJ Matt B & guests, Second and Fourth Wednesday of every month, 10 p.m., $2.

Elbo Room: 647 Valencia, San Francisco. "Bodyshock," w/ Plack Blague, Scott Arford, DJs Crackwhore & Blk Rainbow, 9 p.m., $7.

F8: 1192 Folsom St., San Francisco. "Housepitality," w/ Avatism, EO, Fil Latorre, Bai-ee, 9 p.m., $5-$10.

Lookout: 3600 16th St., San Francisco. "What?," w/ resident DJ Tisdale and guests, 7 p.m., free.

MatrixFillmore: 3138 Fillmore, San Francisco. "Reload," w/ DJ Big Bad Bruce, 10 p.m., free.

Q Bar: 456 Castro, San Francisco. "Booty Call," w/ Juanita More, Joshua J, guests, 9 p.m., $3.

HIP-HOP

Skylark Bar: 3089 16th St., San Francisco. "Mixtape Wednesday," w/ resident DJs Strategy, Junot, Herb Digs, & guests, 9 p.m., $5.

Slate Bar: 2925 16th St., San Francisco. "Special Blend," w/ resident DJs LazyBoy & Mr. Murdock, 9 p.m., free.

Yoshi's San Francisco: 1330 Fillmore, San Francisco. "Hump Day Happy Hour," w/ Ren the Vinyl Archaeologist, 6:30 p.m., free.

ACOUSTIC

Bazaar Cafe: 5927 California, San Francisco. Alan Monasch, 7 p.m.

Hotel Utah: 500 Fourth St., San Francisco. A Talent for Mischief, Peter Blachley with Henry Diltz, Carter Beckworth, 8 p.m., $10.

Plough & Stars: 116 Clement, San Francisco. Daniel Seidel, 9 p.m.

JAZZ

Amnesia: 853 Valencia, San Francisco. Gaucho, Eric Garland's Jazz Session, The Amnesiacs, 7 p.m., free.

Burritt Room: 417 Stockton St., San Francisco. Terry Disley's Rocking Jazz Trio, 6 p.m., free.

Jazz Bistro at Les Joulins: 44 Ellis, San Francisco. Charles Unger Experience, 7:30 p.m., free.

Le Colonial: 20 Cosmo, San Francisco. The Cosmo Alleycats featuring Ms. Emily Wade Adams, 7 p.m., free.

Pier 23 Cafe: Pier 23, San Francisco. Ned Boynton & Friends, 6 p.m., free.

Sheba Piano Lounge: 1419 Fillmore, San Francisco. Sebastian Parker Trio, 8 p.m.

Zingari: 501 Post, San Francisco. Amanda King, 7:30 p.m., free.

INTERNATIONAL

Cafe Cocomo: 650 Indiana, San Francisco. "Bachatalicious," w/ DJs Good Sho & Rodney, 7 p.m., $5-$10.

Cigar Bar & Grill: 850 Montgomery, San Francisco. Sandor Moss Organ Quartet featuring Brian Ho, 8 p.m.

Pachamama Restaurant: 1630 Powell, San Francisco. Cafe Latino Americano, 8 p.m., $12.

REGGAE

Slim's: 333 11th St., San Francisco. Giant Panda Guerilla Dub Squad, The Simpkin Project, The Expanders, 8 p.m., $16.

BLUES

Biscuits and Blues: 401 Mason, San Francisco. HowellDevine, 7:30 & 9:30 p.m., $15.

The Saloon: 1232 Grant, San Francisco. P.A. Slim, 9:30 p.m.

SOUL

The Royal Cuckoo: 3202 Mission, San Francisco. Freddie Hughes & Chris Burns, 7:30 p.m., free.

CONCERTS

WEDNESDAY 1/22

Jonny Lang: W/ Honor by August, 8 p.m., $32.50-$44.50 advance. The Fillmore, 1805 Geary, San Francisco.

S.F. Symphony: 8 p.m., $15-$156. Davies Symphony Hall, 201 Van Ness, San Francisco.

THURSDAY 1/23

Bill Frisell's Big Sur Quintet: Featuring Hank Roberts, Eyvind Kang, Jenny Scheinman, and Rudy Royston, 7:30 p.m., $18-$55. SFJAZZ Center, 205 Franklin St., San Francisco.

Jake Bugg: W/ Albert Hammond Jr., The Skins, 8 p.m., $29.50. Fox Theater - Oakland, 1807 Telegraph, Oakland.

Josh Ritter: W/ Gregory Alan Isakov, 8 p.m., $30-$42 advance. The Fillmore, 1805 Geary, San Francisco.

FRIDAY 1/24

Dave Alvin: Acoustic show with Nina Gerber & Christy McWilson, 8 p.m., $25. Great American Music Hall, 859 O'Farrell, San Francisco.

Bill Frisell: W/ Greg Leisz, Tony Scherr, and Kenny Wollesen, 7:30 p.m., $18-$65. SFJAZZ Center, 205 Franklin St., San Francisco.

Cameron Carpenter: 7:30 p.m., $30-$45. Grace Cathedral, 1100 California, San Francisco.

Darkside: W/ High Water, 9 p.m., $25-$35 advance. The Fillmore, 1805 Geary, San Francisco.

Oakland East Bay Symphony: Enigma Variations: 8 p.m., $20-$70. Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland.

Pride & Joy: 9 p.m., $25. Bimbo's 365 Club, 1025 Columbus, San Francisco.

S.F. Symphony: 6:30 p.m., $15-$156. Davies Symphony Hall, 201 Van Ness, San Francisco.

SATURDAY 1/25

Bill Frisell: 7:30 p.m., $18-$65. SFJAZZ Center, 205 Franklin St., San Francisco.

Nicki Bluhm & The Gramblers: W/ Goodnight, Texas, 9 p.m., $25-$35 advance. The Fillmore, 1805 Geary, San Francisco.

The English Beat: W/ Rusty Zinn & His Band, 9 p.m., $22-$25. Bimbo's 365 Club, 1025 Columbus, San Francisco.

Kiwi Time: W/ Sentinel, Sunrunners, 9 p.m., $10. Great American Music Hall, 859 O'Farrell, San Francisco.

Planet of the Drums XV: W/ AK1200, Dara, Dieselboy, Messinian, Must Die!, 9 p.m., $20-$25. The Regency Ballroom, 1290 Sutter, San Francisco.

S.F. Symphony: 8 p.m., $15-$156. Davies Symphony Hall, 201 Van Ness, San Francisco.

SUNDAY 1/26

American Bach Soloists: 4 p.m., $20-$94. St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 1111 O'Farrell, San Francisco.

Bill Frisell: W/ Craig Taborn & Kenny Wollesen, 4 p.m., $18-$55. SFJAZZ Center, 205 Franklin St., San Francisco.

S.F. Symphony: 2 p.m., $15-$156. Davies Symphony Hall, 201 Van Ness, San Francisco.

Pinchas Zukerman and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra: 7 p.m., $46-$150. Davies Symphony Hall, 201 Van Ness, San Francisco.

MONDAY 1/27

Wheels Off: The Rhett Miller Show: Variety show featuring music and comedy by John Doe, Paul F. Tompkins, and more. Presented by SF Sketchfest, 8 p.m., $30. Yoshi's San Francisco, 1330 Fillmore, San Francisco.

TUESDAY 1/28

Washed Out: W/ Kisses, 8 p.m., $23.50-$33.50 advance. The Fillmore, 1805 Geary, San Francisco.

THURSDAY 1/23

ROCK

Amnesia: 853 Valencia, San Francisco. "Mods v. Rockers," w/ Warm Soda, Big Tits, The Seasides, 9 p.m., $5.

Boom Boom Room: 1601 Fillmore, San Francisco. Them Guns, Warm Orange, 9:30 p.m., $5 advance.

Brick & Mortar Music Hall: 1710 Mission, San Francisco. Eyehategod, Graves at Sea, Hazzard's Cure, Bedrücken, 9 p.m., $20-$24.

The Chapel: 777 Valencia St., San Francisco. Wooden Shjips, Carlton Melton, Golden Void, 9 p.m., $14-$16.

The Independent: 628 Divisadero, San Francisco. Superhumanoids, Sister Crayon, James Supercave, 8 p.m., $12-$14.

The Knockout: 3223 Mission, San Francisco. Life Stinks, Victor Vapor, Shark Toys, Gangrene Gang, 9 p.m., $6.

Make-Out Room: 3225 22nd St., San Francisco. POW!, Warm White, Mane, 7:30 p.m., $8.

Milk Bar: 1840 Haight, San Francisco. The Grandpa Paws, Vinyl Spectrum, We Are the Men, The Hudson Heat, 8 p.m., $6-$8.

Red Devil Lounge: 1695 Polk, San Francisco. Roadside Memorial, Inferno of Joy, Altar de Fey, 8 p.m., $7-$10.

Slim's: 333 11th St., San Francisco. Stick Men, Grex, 8 p.m., $23.



Conrad Mcgee

Ethereality and Head-nodding

RYAN HEMSWORTH

With Space Ghost and DJ Dials. 8:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 24, at the Independent. $15-$17; theindependentsf.com.

Once upon a time, kids grew up on cheap electric guitars purchased out of the Sears catalog and started garage bands. Today's upstart music producers, however, cut their teeth on the sleek keys of a MacBook. Canadian Ryan Hemsworth knows this — he dealt in "real" instruments until going to college, when he got his first Apple laptop and started exploring the world of software. He works it better than most twentysomethings. Hemsworth's evocative soundscapes deposit smooth vocals and vaporous textures over beats and pacing borrowed from hip-hop and R&B. Ethereality and head-nodding being now all the rage, Hemsworth's skill on the trackpad shot him to buzzworthy status last year, with the requisite Pitchfork interview and everything. His debut album, last fall's *Guilt Trips*, distills his stuttering take on electronic R&B to a pleasant immersion: there's lots of breathing room, but enough elements flitting in and out that it feels native to this hyperactive age. ***Ian S. Port***

DANCE

1015 Folsom: 1015 Folsom St., San Francisco. Nosaj Thing, Prefuse 73, FaltyDL, Ruff Draft, DJ Dials, Benito, Bdot, 10 p.m., $17.50 advance.

Audio Discotech: 316 11th St., San Francisco. Overwerk, Andy P, Shawn Steel, 9:30 p.m., $10 advance.

The Cafe: 2369 Market, San Francisco. "iPan Dulce!," 9 p.m., $5.

Cat Club: 1190 Folsom, San Francisco. "Throwback Thursdays," '80s night with DJs Damon, Steve Washington, Dangerous Dan, and guests, 9 p.m., $6 (free before 9:30 p.m.).

The Cellar: 685 Sutter, San Francisco. "XO," w/ DJs Astro & Rose, 10 p.m., $5.

Elbo Room: 647 Valencia, San Francisco. "Afrolicious," w/ DJs Pleasuremaker, Señor Oz, and live guests, 9:30 p.m., $5-$8.

Harlot: 46 Minna, San Francisco. "Set," w/ Mario Basanov, Tyrel Williams, Larry Gonnello Jr., 9 p.m., $10 advance.

Madrone Art Bar: 500 Divisadero, San Francisco. "Night Fever," 9 p.m., $5 after 10 p.m.

Rickshaw Stop: 155 Fell, San Francisco. "Popscene," w/ Betty Who, Holychild, DJs Aaron Axelsen & Omar, 9:30 p.m., $13-$15.

Ruby Skye: 420 Mason, San Francisco. "Awakening," w/ Lucky Date, Paris & Simo, 9 p.m., $15-$20 advance.

Vessel: 85 Campton, San Francisco. "Base," w/ Adriatique, JOill, 10 p.m.

HIP-HOP

John Colins: 138 Minna, San Francisco. "#Quattro," w/ DJ Dino, Fourth Thursday of every month, 9 p.m.

Public Works: 161 Erie, San Francisco. "Free," w/ Antwon, $u$pect, Sad Andy, 10 p.m., free with RSVP.

Skylark Bar: 3089 16th St., San Francisco. "Peaches," w/ lady DJs DeeAndroid, Lady Fingaz, That Girl, Umami, Inkfat, and Andre, 10 p.m., free.

ACOUSTIC

Atlas Cafe: 3049 20th St., San Francisco. JimBo Trout & The Fishpeople, 8 p.m., free.

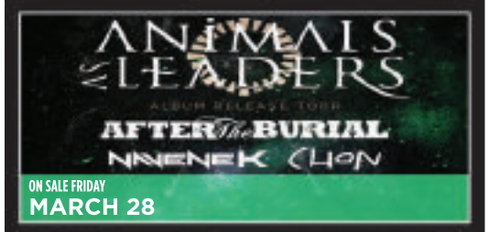
Bazaar Cafe: 5927 California, San Francisco. Acoustic Open Mic, 7 p.m.

Hemlock Tavern: 1131 Polk, San Francisco. Kitten Grenade, Halcyonaire, Sad Bastard Book Club, 8:30 p.m., $6.

Hotel Utah: 500 Fourth St., San Francisco. Scott Gagner, Kevin Garrett, The Yellow Hope Project,

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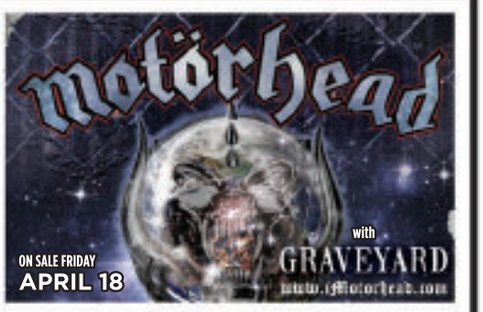
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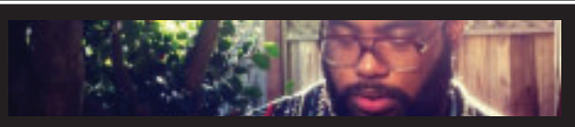
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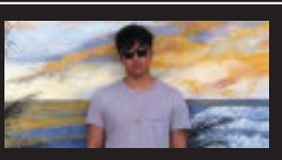


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MONDAY 1/27
BOLD ITALIC: TECH PANEL

FRIDAY 1/31 - LOFT
RESONATE: ROOTNOTE TAKEOVER

THURSDAY 2/6
TWERKSHOP

FRIDAY 2/7
AYLI: REBOLLEDO (PACHANGA BOYS)

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Plough & Stars: 116 Clement, San Francisco. Tipsy House, Fourth Thursday of every month, 9 p.m., free.

JAZZ

Le Colonial: 20 Cosmo, San Francisco. Steve Lucky & The Rhumba Bums, 7:30 p.m.

Pier 23 Cafe: Pier 23, San Francisco. Dick Fregulia, 7 p.m., free.

The Royal Cuckoo: 3202 Mission, San Francisco. Charlie Siebert & Chris Siebert, 7:30 p.m., free.

Top of the Mark: One Nob Hill, 999 California, San Francisco. Stompy Jones, 7:30 p.m., $10.

Yoshi's San Francisco: 1330 Fillmore, San Francisco. Airto Moreira & Eyedentity, 8 p.m., $22-$24.

Zingari: 501 Post, San Francisco. Barbara Ochoa, 7:30 p.m., free.

INTERNATIONAL

Cafe Claude: 7 Claude, San Francisco. Trio Garufa, 7:30 p.m., free.

Cafe Cocomo: 650 Indiana, San Francisco. N'Rumba, El DJ X, 8 p.m., $12.

Cigar Bar & Grill: 850 Montgomery, San Francisco. Cachimba, 8 p.m.

Sheba Piano Lounge: 1419 Fillmore, San Francisco. Gary Flores & Descarga Caliente, 8 p.m.

BLUES

50 Mason Social House: 50 Mason, San Francisco. Bill Phillippe, 5:30 p.m., free.

Biscuits and Blues: 401 Mason, San Francisco. Brian Auger, 7:30 & 9:30 p.m., $20-$24.

The Saloon: 1232 Grant, San Francisco. Freddie Roulette, 4 p.m.; Steve Freund, 9:30 p.m.

Tupelo: 1337 Green St., San Francisco. G.G. Amos, 9 p.m.

EXPERIMENTAL

The Luggage Store: 1007 Market, San Francisco. RTD3, Jan Pusina, 8 p.m., $6-$10.



Bryan Murray

Not That Kind of Improv

MYRA MELFORD

With Ben Goldberg Duo, Han Bennink, and Mary Oliver Duo. 9 pm. and 9:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, Jan. 23-24, at Duende. $15; duendeoakland.com.

There's epic adventure in the works in Oakland this weekend with two consecutive nights of world-class jazz improvisation. First up: drummer Han Bennink, Dutch pioneer of the "free music" movement of the 1960s, and celebrated pianist Myra Melford, a 2013 Guggenheim Fellow. Then clarinetist Ben Goldberg, a veteran Bay Area composer-improviser who's been directing awesome big-band compositions lately, and Mary Oliver, an international new music master. The concept at play here is that everything about these performances will move — fluid melody, harmony, and rhythm; no boundaries; no fear. The aim is for the music to excite and surprise both listeners and players. ***Sam Prestianni***

FRIDAY 1/24

ROCK

50 Mason Social House: 50 Mason, San Francisco. Bigleaf, Glowing Cat Eyes, Whirl, Luminous Newts, 9 p.m., $10.

Bottom of the Hill: 1233 17th St., San Francisco. Drenge, Happy Diving, The Started-Its, 9:30 p.m., $10.

Brick & Mortar Music Hall: 1710 Mission, San Francisco. The Strypes, 9 p.m., $12.

DNA Lounge: 375 11th St., San Francisco. Blood on the Dance Floor, Haley Rose, Davey Suicide, Awoken Shadows, Kat Haus, rescheduled from Dec. 19, 2013, 7 p.m., $17-$20; One of Many, The Trims, Oranguhtango, The Skinny Guns, 8:30 p.m., $8-$10.

Hemlock Tavern: 1131 Polk, San Francisco. Useless Eaters, Scraper, Generation Loss, 9 p.m., $6.

Slim's: 333 11th St., San Francisco. Dent May, Jack Name, Chris Cohen, 9 p.m., $12.

Sub-Mission Art Space (Balazo 18 Gallery): 2183 Mission, San Francisco. Dot Punto, The Kaizoku, Creature Baby, 8 p.m., $8.

DANCE

1015 Folsom: 1015 Folsom St., San Francisco. Passion Pit (DJ set), Vin Sol, Afrolicious Soundsystem, Jamie Jams, White Mike, Jays One, DJ Drome, 10 p.m., $20 advance.

Audio Discotech: 316 11th St., San Francisco. Eric Volta, 9:30 p.m., $10 advance.

BeatBox: 314 11th St., San Francisco. "U-Haul," w/ DJs China G & Chelsea Starr, 10 p.m., $5-$10.

The Cafe: 2369 Market, San Francisco. "Boy Bar," w/ DJ Matt Consola, 9 p.m., $5.

Cat Club: 1190 Folsom, San Francisco. "Dark Shadows," w/ DJs Daniel Skellington, Melting Girl, Owen, and Keyz, 9:30 p.m., $7 ($3 before 10 p.m.).

Elbo Room: 647 Valencia, San Francisco. "120 Minutes," w/ DJ Nate, Santa Muerte, Chauncey CC, 10 p.m., $10-$15.

The Independent: 628 Divisadero, San Francisco. Ryan Hemsworth, Space Ghost, DJ Dials, 9 p.m., $15-$17.

Lookout: 3600 16th St., San Francisco. "HYSL," 9 p.m., $3.

Madrone Art Bar: 500 Divisadero, San Francisco. "I Ð the '90s," w/ DJs Samala, Teo, Mr. Grant, & Sonny Phono, Fourth Friday of every month, 9 p.m., $5.

Mighty: 119 Utah, San Francisco. "Throwback: '90s House Night," w/ Ren the Vinyl Archaeologist, Andrew Phelan, Tyrel Williams, DJ Taj, Jayvi Velasco, 9 p.m., free before midnight with RSVP.

Milk Bar: 1840 Haight, San Francisco. "Disorder: 1-Year Anniversary," w/ Inhalt, Vows (L.A.), High-Functioning Flesh, DJs Nickie & Omar, 9 p.m., $7.

Project One: 251 Rhode Island, San Francisco. Kilo-Watts, Plantrae, Bedrockk, Duffrey, 10 p.m., $10-$20.

Public Works: 161 Erie, San Francisco. "Heart Phoenix: Higher," w/ Francesca Lombardo, Christian Martin, Josh Vincent, Vitamindevo, Gravity, Shooey, DJ Dane, Layne Loomis, AM Rebel, 9 p.m., $12-$20.

Ruby Skye: 420 Mason, San Francisco. Bassjackers, 9 p.m., $25 advance.

S.F. Eagle: 398 12th St., San Francisco. "Cub Trap," 8 p.m.

Temple: 540 Howard, San Francisco. "Refresh," w/ David Gregory, Papa Lu, John Halohan, Quinn Jerome, Twin Spin, King James, 10 p.m., $15.

Vessel: 85 Campton, San Francisco. "Project X," w/ Matth & Feldy, Beau Kelly, 10 p.m., $10-$30.

HIP-HOP

EZ5: 682 Commercial, San Francisco. "Decompression," Fridays, 5-9 p.m.

John Colins: 138 Minna, San Francisco. "#Flow," w/ The Whooligan & Mikos Da Gawd, Fourth Friday of every month, 10 p.m., free befoe 11 p.m.

ACOUSTIC

Bazaar Cafe: 5927 California, San Francisco. Mick Shaffer & Danny Allen, 7 p.m.

Hotel Utah: 500 Fourth St., San Francisco. The Dustbowl Revival, Lauren Hulbert, 9 p.m., $10-$12.

Thee Parkside: 1600 17th St., San Francisco. Jayke Orvis & The Broken Band, James Hunnicutt, The Pine Box Boys, 9 p.m., $10.

JAZZ

Bird & Beckett: 653 Chenery, San Francisco. Chuck Peterson Quintet, Fourth Friday of every month, 5:30 p.m.

Cafe Claude: 7 Claude, San Francisco. Steve Lucky & Carmen Getit, 7:30 p.m., free.

Hotel Rex: 562 Sutter, San Francisco. "All That Jazz," w/ Jason Brock, 8 p.m., $20.

Jazz Bistro at Les Joulins: 44 Ellis, San Francisco. Charles Unger Experience, 7:30 p.m., free.

The Palace Hotel: 2 New Montgomery, San Francisco. The Klipptones, 8 p.m., free.

Pier 23 Cafe: Pier 23, San Francisco. Legends & Friends, 8 p.m., free.

The Royal Cuckoo: 3202 Mission, San Francisco. Jules Broussard, Danny Armstrong, and Chris Siebert, 7:30 p.m., free.

Top of the Mark: One Nob Hill, 999 California, San Francisco. Black Market Jazz Orchestra, 9 p.m., $10.

INTERNATIONAL

Cafe Cocomo: 650 Indiana, San Francisco. Taste Fridays, featuring local cuisine tastings, salsa bands, dance lessons, and more, 7:30 p.m., $15 (free entry to patio).

Cigar Bar & Grill: 850 Montgomery, San Francisco. Conjunto Picante, 10 p.m.

Pachamama Restaurant: 1630 Powell, San Francisco. Cuban Night with Fito Reinoso, 7:30 & 9:15 p.m., $15-$18.

Red Poppy Art House: 2698 Folsom, San Francisco. Lou Lou & The Gypsy Jivers, 7:30 p.m., $15-$20.

BLUES

Biscuits and Blues: 401 Mason, San Francisco. Brian Auger, 7:30 & 10 p.m., $20-$24.

Lou's Fish Shack: 300 Jefferson St., San Francisco. Robert "Hollywood" Jenkins, 6 p.m.

The Saloon: 1232 Grant, San Francisco. Cathy Lemons, 4 p.m.; Shad Harris, 9:30 p.m.

Sheba Piano Lounge: 1419 Fillmore, San Francisco. Aki Kumar, 9 p.m.

FUNK

Boom Boom Room: 1601 Fillmore, San Francisco. Turkuaz, DJ K-Os, 9:30 p.m., $12-$15.

Make-Out Room: 3225 22nd St., San Francisco. "Loose Joints," w/ DJs Centipede, Damon Bell, and Tom Thump, 10 p.m., $5-$10.

SOUL

Edinburgh Castle: 950 Geary, San Francisco. "Soul Crush," w/ DJ Serious Leisure, 10 p.m., free.

Grant & Green Saloon: 1371 Grant, San Francisco. Big Blu Soul Revue, 9 p.m., free.

Yoshi's San Francisco: 1330 Fillmore, San Francisco. The Spinners, 8 & 10 p.m., $29-$65.

SATURDAY 1/25

ROCK

Bender's: 806 S. Van Ness, San Francisco. Fracas, P.R.O.B.L.E.M.S., Nihilist Cunt, 10 p.m., $5.

Bottom of the Hill: 1233 17th St., San Francisco. Owl Paws, James Riotto, Cave Clove, 9:30 p.m., $10.

Brick & Mortar Music Hall: 1710 Mission, San Francisco. Mondo Drag, Wax Children, Yogurt Brain, 9 p.m., $7.

The Chapel: 777 Valencia St., San Francisco. !!!, Fine Steps, 9 p.m., $20-$22.

Hemlock Tavern: 1131 Polk, San Francisco. Hot Lunch, Once & Future Band, Planes of Satori, 9 p.m., $7.

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	SHAD HARRIS (9:30PM - 1:30AM)
SAT 1/25	DAVE WORKMAN (4PM - 8PM)
	RON HACKER (9:30PM - 1:30AM)
SUN 1/26	BLUES POWER (4PM - 8PM)
	THE DOOR SLAMMERS (9:30PM - 1:30AM)
MON 1/27	PETER LINDMAN (4PM - 8PM)
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FTM competition
Hosted by **MURRAY HILL**
plus **FREE PLAY DANCE CREW**
and **DJ BOYFRIEND**

SUN 1/26 9PM FREE B4 9:30PM/ $6 AFTER
DUB MISSION
presents the best in dub, roots reggae & dancehall with
DJ SEP, VINNIE ESPARZA
(Groove Merchant/Amoeba)
and special guest
EL KOOL KYLE
(El Superritmo/Reggae vs Cumbia)

MON 1/27 9PM $7
New Weird West presents
AMERICALIA
an Explosion of New Sound
by members of
OS BEACHES, SHIMMERING LEAVES, KILLBOSSA
plus
DJ CAVEMAN & THE FOSSILS;
Visuals by Mad Alchemy

TUE 1/28 9PM $7
Elbo Room presents
WAX CHILDREN,
VOID BOYS, NIVELES
(members of Mondo Drag) and
DISAPPEARING PEOPLE

WED 1/29 9PM $7
Elbo Room presents
LEE GALLAGHER & THE HALLELUJAH,
DOWN & OUTLAWS,
THE LOVE DIMENSION,
SPIRAL ELECTRIC

UPCOMING

THU 1/30	AFROLICIOUS
FRI 1/31	NVO/ SLAYER'S CLUB DJS
SAT 2/1	SATURDAY NIGHT SOUL PARTY
SUN 2/2	DUB MISSION: DJ SEP, SILVERBACK

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THE OVERCOMMITMENTS

FRI 1/24 8PM $22 ADV / $24 DOOR
TIM FLANNERY

TUE 1/28 7PM $5
BEST OF L.A. INDIE
FEAT: THE JANKS, KING WASHINGTON, AND THE LUCKY LONELY

THUR 1/30 7PM
RESERVED SEAT: $27 ADV / $30 DOS
STANDING/GA: $14 ADV / $17 DOS
RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT
W/ NELL ROBINSON

FRI 1/31 8PM $22 ADV / $27 DOOR
PETER ROWAN
& SPECIAL GUESTS
W/ MELODY WALKER & JACOB GROOPMAN

SAT 2/1 8PM $22 ADV / $27 DOOR
WONDER BREAD 5

FRI 2/7 8PM $18 ADV / $24 DOOR
CRYPTICAL
W/ SPECIAL GUEST STU ALLEN

SAT 2/8 8PM $20 ADV / $25 DOOR
SAN QUENTIN MUSIC LOCKDOWN
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SAT 2/15 - 8PM $27 ADV / $32 DOOR
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Hotel Utah: 500 Fourth St., San Francisco. New Spell, Dregas, Natalie John, 9 p.m., $10-$15.

The Knockout: 3223 Mission, San Francisco. "Shine On," w/ Soft Science, Silver Shadows, Dissolve, UFOFBI, 9 p.m.

Milk Bar: 1840 Haight, San Francisco. Before the Brave, Show Ponies, Grow & Twine, 9 p.m., $8-$10.

Rickshaw Stop: 155 Fell, San Francisco. Mutual Benefit, Dan Casey, Dim Peaks, 9 p.m., $10-$12.

Sub-Mission Art Space (Balazo 18 Gallery): 2183 Mission, San Francisco. Hello Monster, Light the Rocket, The Boys After, Fighting the Future, 8 p.m., $8.

DANCE

Audio Discotech: 316 11th St., San Francisco. "Modular," w/ Subb-an, Super Flu, Chemical Ali, Pedro Arbulu, MFYRS, 9:30 p.m., $10-$25.

BeatBox: 314 11th St., San Francisco. "Bearracuda," w/ DJs P Play & Robert Jeffrey, 9 p.m., $6-$10.

Cat Club: 1190 Folsom, San Francisco. "Villainy: The Dance Club with a Dark Side," w/ DJs Tomas Diablo, MyKill, Joe Radio, and Mz. Samantha, 9:30 p.m., $5-$8.

DNA Lounge: 375 11th St., San Francisco. "Bootie S.F.," w/ A+D, DJ Surda, DJ Dada, Smash-Up Derby, Lucio K, Keith Kraft, more, 9 p.m., $10-$15.

Infusion Lounge: 124 Ellis, San Francisco. "Set," Fourth Saturday of every month, 10 p.m., $20.

Madrone Art Bar: 500 Divisadero, San Francisco. "Blunted Funk," w/ resident DJs Sneak-E Pete & Chilipino, Fourth Saturday of every other month, 9 p.m., $5 (free before 10 p.m.).

Mezzanine: 444 Jessie, San Francisco. Beats for Boobs: 10-Year Anniversary, 7 p.m., $35-$100.

Mighty: 119 Utah, San Francisco. "The Road Back," w/ Stanton Warriors, 10 p.m., $15 advance.

Monarch: 101 6th St., San Francisco. "Lights Down Low," w/ Benoit & Sergio, Cooper Saver, Richie Panic, Sleazemore, 10 p.m., $20-$25.

Public Works: 161 Erie, San Francisco. "As You Like It," w/ Robag Wruhme, Andhim, Session Victim, Rich Korach, Dr. Sleep, Lance DeSardi, Bells & Whistles, 9 p.m., $15-$25.

Ruby Skye: 420 Mason, San Francisco. Cash Cash, Paris Blohm, 9 p.m., $20 advance.

Slim's: 333 11th St., San Francisco. Planet Booty, Midtown Social, FogDub, DJ E Da Boss, 9 p.m., $13.

The Stud: 399 Ninth St., San Francisco. "Dark Room: 3-Year Anniversary," w/ Darienne Lake, Lady Bear, The Lady Hyde, Porcelain, Phatima, Johnny Rockitt, Rita Dambook, Dallas Coulter, Jillian Gnarling, Trixxie Carr, DJs Jimmy Swear & Le Perv, more, 9:30 p.m., $8-$10.

Temple: 540 Howard, San Francisco. "Life," w/ Festiva, Tigran, Halloran, King Size Slap, Mario Dubbz, Big Will, Mackswell, 10 p.m., $20.

Vessel: 85 Campton, San Francisco. Chris Garcia, DJ Nile, 10 p.m., $10-$30.

HIP-HOP

John Colins: 138 Minna, San Francisco. "Nice," w/ DJ Apollo, Fourth Saturday of every month, 10 p.m., $5.

Slate Bar: 2925 16th St., San Francisco. "So Fresh," w/ DJs Miles Green & Tactics, 10 p.m.

ACOUSTIC

a.Muse Gallery: 614 Alabama, San Francisco. All My Pretty Ones, 7:30 p.m., $5-$15.

Bazaar Cafe: 5927 California, San Francisco. Nik Pilgrim & Tom Relling, 7 p.m.

The Knockout: 3223 Mission, San Francisco. Slow Motion Cowboys, The Damn Union, Stella Royale, Sean Kohler, 4 p.m., $5.

Plough & Stars: 116 Clement, San Francisco. Savannah Blu, 9 p.m.

JAZZ

Cafe Claude: 7 Claude, San Francisco. Lori Carsillo, 7:30 p.m., free.

Jazz Bistro at Les Joulins: 44 Ellis, San Francisco. Bill "Doc" Webster & Jazz Nostalgia, 7:30 p.m., free.

Sheba Piano Lounge: 1419 Fillmore, San Francisco. The Robert Stewart Experience, 9 p.m.

Zingari: 501 Post, San Francisco. Anne O'Brien, Last Saturday of every month, 8 p.m., free.

INTERNATIONAL

1015 Folsom: 1015 Folsom St., San Francisco. "Pura," 9 p.m., $20.

Cafe Cocomo: 650 Indiana, San Francisco. Pepe y Su Orquesta, DJ EMV, 8 p.m., $15.

Cigar Bar & Grill: 850 Montgomery, San Francisco. Danilo y Universal, 10 p.m.

Make-Out Room: 3225 22nd St., San Francisco. "El SuperRitmo," w/ DJs Roger Mas & El Kool Kyle, 10 p.m., $5 before 11 p.m.

Red Poppy Art House: 2698 Folsom, San Francisco. YeYe Suarez Ensemble, 7:30 p.m., $12-$15.

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REGGAE

Pier 23 Cafe: Pier 23, San Francisco. Native Elements, Last Saturday of every month, 10 p.m., $10-$15.

BLUES

Biscuits and Blues: 401 Mason, San Francisco. Roy Gaines, 7:30 & 10 p.m., $22.

Lou's Fish Shack: 300 Jefferson St., San Francisco. Willie G, 6 p.m.

The Royal Cuckoo: 3202 Mission, San Francisco. Big Bones & Chris Burns, 7:30 p.m., free.

The Saloon: 1232 Grant, San Francisco. Dave Workman, Fourth Saturday of every month, 4 p.m.; Ron Hacker, Last Saturday of every month, 9:30 p.m.

EXPERIMENTAL

Center for New Music: 55 Taylor St., San Francisco. c4nm Intern Show, 7:30 p.m., free.

San Francisco Conservatory of Music: 50 Oak, San Francisco. sfSoundGroup, 8 p.m., $8-$15.

FUNK

Boom Boom Room: 1601 Fillmore, San Francisco. Turkuaz, DJ K-Os, 9:30 p.m., $12-$15.

SOUL

Edinburgh Castle: 950 Geary, San Francisco. "Nightbeat," w/ DJs Primo, Lucky, and Dr. Scott, Fourth Saturday of every month, 9 p.m., $3.

Yoshi's San Francisco: 1330 Fillmore, San Francisco. The Spinners, 8 & 10 p.m., $39-$65.

SUNDAY 1/26

ROCK

Bottom of the Hill: 1233 17th St., San Francisco. Red City Radio, Elway, Direct Hit!, 8 p.m., $12.

Brick & Mortar Music Hall: 1710 Mission, San Francisco. Spindrift, San Francisco Raga Association, Cosmonauts, Cool Ghouls, DJ Jodie Artichoke, 9 p.m., $7-$10.

The Chapel: 777 Valencia St., San Francisco. !!!, G. Green, 8 p.m., $20-$22.

Hemlock Tavern: 1131 Polk, San Francisco. Get Dead, The Shell Corporation, Payoff, 8:30 p.m., $6.

Thee Parkside: 1600 17th St., San Francisco. Silver Snakes, Griever, Children of God, Culture Abuse, 8 p.m., $10.

DANCE

440 Castro: 440 Castro, San Francisco. "Sunday Furry Sunday," Last Sunday of every month, 4-10 p.m., $1.

Elbo Room: 647 Valencia, San Francisco. "Dub Mission," w/ El Kool Kyle, DJ Sep, Vinnie Esparza, 9 p.m., $6 (free before 9:30 p.m.).

F8: 1192 Folsom St., San Francisco. "Stamina," w/ guest DJs Nymfo & A Sides, 10 p.m., free.

The Knockout: 3223 Mission, San Francisco. "Sweater Funk," 10 p.m., free.

The Parlor: 2801 Leavenworth, San Francisco. DJ Marc deVasconcelos, 10 p.m., free.

S.F. Eagle: 398 12th St., San Francisco. "1982: We Can Dance If We Want To," w/ DJs Ben Holder & Chaka Quan, 7 p.m., $5.

Temple: 540 Howard, San Francisco. "Sunset Arcade," 18+ dance party & game night, 9 p.m., $10.

HIP-HOP

Boom Boom Room: 1601 Fillmore, San Francisco. "Return of the Cypher," 9:30 p.m., free.

ACOUSTIC

Amnesia: 853 Valencia, San Francisco. Cowboy Ballet, Kelly McFarling, Spurs, 9 p.m., $7-$10.

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SF PREMIERE
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ROXIE THEATER / 9:00PM / $10



THU / FEBRUARY 27

SF PREMIERE
BROTHERS HYPNOTIC
NEW PEOPLE CINEMA / 7:00PM / $10

SF PREMIERE
DEATH METAL ANGOLA
NEW PEOPLE CINEMA / 9:00PM / $10
Q&A WITH DIRECTOR JEREMY XIDO



FRI / FEBRUARY 28

SF PREMIERE
REVENGE OF THE MEKONS
ATA / 7:00PM / $10

SF PREMIERE
BAYOU MAHARAJAH
The Tragic Genius of James Booker
ATA / 9:00PM / $10



SUN / MARCH 2

SF PREMIERE
KIDS LIKE YOU & ME
ATA / 4:30PM / $10
Q&A WITH DIRECTOR BILL CODY

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Compelling Nerves

POW!

With Warm White, Mane. 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 23, at the Make-Out Room; $5.

High-Tech Boom, local quartet Pow!'s unnerving, synth-laden rock debut, saw release on Castle Face Records this month. As you'd expect from the title, some songs angrily take aim at a changing San Francisco, while a John Dwyer-penned press release enumerates Thee Oh Sees leader's own local gripes. This all means that Pow! is at the center of attention for issues quite separate from the quality of its music — but even still, the band's unique merging of percolating electronics and damaged guitar rock speaks quite compellingly for itself. Bandleader Byron Blum writes up-tempo screeds, but Pow! is distinguished by the ways a synthesizer and taunting vocal delivery set each propulsive tune off-balance. It's a topical album by an upstart band, but its greatest source of strength is the music. ***Sam Lefebvre***

The Lucky Horseshoe: 453 Cortland, San Francisco. The Earl Brothers, 8 p.m.

Make-Out Room: 3225 22nd St., San Francisco. Kelley Stoltz, James Finch Jr., Calls, 7:30 p.m., $8.

Plough & Stars: 116 Clement, San Francisco. Seisiún with John Sherry & Kyle Thayer, 9 p.m.

JAZZ

Jazz Bistro at Les Joulins: 44 Ellis, San Francisco. Bill "Doc" Webster & Jazz Nostalgia, 7:30 p.m., free.

The Royal Cuckoo: 3202 Mission, San Francisco. Lavay Smith & Chris Siebert, 7:30 p.m., free.

Zingari: 501 Post, San Francisco. Barbara Ochoa, 7:30 p.m., free.

INTERNATIONAL

El Rio: 3158 Mission, San Francisco. "Salsa Sundays," Second and Fourth Sunday of every month, 3 p.m., $8-$10.

Yoshi's San Francisco: 1330 Fillmore, San Francisco. Pedro Sá Moraes, 7 p.m., $12-$16.

BLUES

Biscuits and Blues: 401 Mason, San Francisco. Otis Taylor Band, 7:30 & 9:30 p.m., $24.

Lou's Fish Shack: 300 Jefferson St., San Francisco. Sam Johnson, 4 p.m.

The Saloon: 1232 Grant, San Francisco. Blues Power, 4 p.m.; The Door Slammers, 9:30 p.m.

Swig: 571 Geary, San Francisco. Sunday Blues Jam with Ed Ivey, 9 p.m.

MONDAY 1/27

Brick & Mortar Music Hall: 1710 Mission, San Francisco. Emily Kinney, Megan Keely, The Octobers, 7:30 p.m., $12-$40.

El Rio: 3158 Mission, San Francisco. Down Dirty Shake, Lady Stardust, Open Bar, 7 p.m., $5.

Elbo Room: 647 Valencia, San Francisco. "Americalia," w/ Mark Matos & guests, 9 p.m. continues through, $7.

The Knockout: 3223 Mission, San Francisco. The Shape, Rad Cloud, Rachel & The Rats, Dave & Sabina, 9 p.m., $8.

DANCE

DNA Lounge: 375 11th St., San Francisco. "Death Guild," 18+ dance party with DJs Decay, Joe Radio, Melting Girl, & guests, 9:30 p.m., $3-$5.

Q Bar: 456 Castro, San Francisco. "Wanted," w/ DJs Key&Kite and Richie Panic, 9 p.m., free.

Underground SF: 424 Haight, San Francisco. "Vienetta Discotheque," w/ DJs Stanley Frank and Robert Jeffrey, 10 p.m., free.

ACOUSTIC

Amnesia: 853 Valencia, San Francisco. The Earl Brothers, Fourth Monday of every month, 9 p.m., free.

Bazaar Cafe: 5927 California, San Francisco. West Coast Songwriters Competition, 7 p.m.

Hotel Utah: 500 Fourth St., San Francisco. Open Mic with Brendan Getzell, 8 p.m., free.

Osteria: 3277 Sacramento, San Francisco. "Acoustic Bistro," 7 p.m., free.

The Saloon: 1232 Grant, San Francisco. Peter Lindman, 4 p.m.

JAZZ

Jazz Bistro at Les Joulins: 44 Ellis, San Francisco. Eugene Pliner Quartet with Tod Dickow, 7:30 p.m., free.

Le Colonial: 20 Cosmo, San Francisco. Le Jazz Hot, 7 p.m., free.

Sheba Piano Lounge: 1419 Fillmore, San Francisco. City Jazz Instrumental Jam Session, 8 p.m.

Zingari: 501 Post, San Francisco. Nora Maki, 7:30 p.m., free.

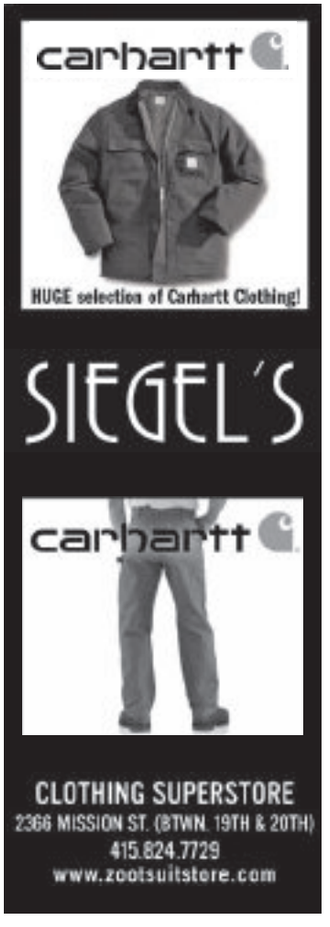
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The San Francisco Media Company is seeking Bay Area artists to help us improve a handful of our newsracks. We'll provide 15 boxes and a small stipend to the 15 most talented artists to remake as they see fit.

ALL SUBMISSIONS ARE DUE BY FEBRUARY 19TH 2014





REGGAE

Skylark Bar: 3089 16th St., San Francisco. "Skylarking," w/ I&I Vibration, 10 p.m., free.

BLUES

The Saloon: 1232 Grant, San Francisco. The Bachelors, 9:30 p.m.

SOUL

Madrone Art Bar: 500 Divisadero, San Francisco. "M.O.M. (Motown on Mondays)," w/ DJ Gordo Cabeza & Timoteo Gigante, 8 p.m., free.

TUESDAY 1/28

ROCK

The Chapel: 777 Valencia St., San Francisco. Black Cobra Vipers, Sandy's, Melvoy, 8 p.m., $12.

Elbo Room: 647 Valencia, San Francisco. Wax Children, Void Boys, Niveles, Disappearing People, 9 p.m., $7.

Hemlock Tavern: 1131 Polk, San Francisco. Spooky Flowers, Sunhaze, 8:30 p.m., $5.

Hotel Utah: 500 Fourth St., San Francisco. Fever Fever, 8 p.m., $8-$10.

The Knockout: 3223 Mission, San Francisco. Ultra Bidé, Street Eaters, Baus, DJ Jesse Luscious, 9:30 p.m., $8.

DANCE

Aunt Charlie's Lounge: 133 Turk, San Francisco. "High Fantasy," w/ DJ Viv, Myles Cooper, & guests, 10 p.m., $2.

The Independent: 628 Divisadero, San Francisco. Robert DeLong, Mystery Skulls, Aaron Axelsen, 8 p.m., $15.

Monarch: 101 6th St., San Francisco. "Soundpieces," 10 p.m., free-$10.

Underground SF: 424 Haight, San Francisco. "Shelter," 10 p.m., free.

HIP-HOP

Brick & Mortar Music Hall: 1710 Mission, San Francisco. Troy LLF, Money Block, Fly Street Gang, Squidy Bo, Money Alwayz, 9 p.m., $5.

ACOUSTIC

Amnesia: 853 Valencia, San Francisco. Farallons, Sugar Candy Mountain, Assateague, 9:15 p.m., $7.

Bazaar Cafe: 5927 California, San Francisco. Songwriter in Residence: Tom Rhodes, 7 p.m. continues through.

Plough & Stars: 116 Clement, San Francisco. Song session with Cormac Gannon, Last Tuesday of every month, 9 p.m.

JAZZ

Burritt Room: 417 Stockton St., San Francisco. Terry Disley's Rocking Jazz Trio, 6 p.m., free.

Jazz Bistro at Les Joulins: 44 Ellis, San Francisco. Clifford Lamb, Mel Butts, and Friends, 7:30 p.m., free.

Le Colonial: 20 Cosmo, San Francisco. Lavay Smith & Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers, 7 p.m.

Sheba Piano Lounge: 1419 Fillmore, San Francisco. Michael Parsons, 8 p.m.

Tupelo: 1337 Green St., San Francisco. Mal Sharpe's Big Money in Jazz Band, 6 p.m.

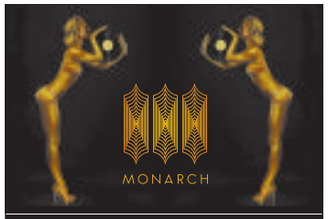
Verdi Club: 2424 Mariposa, San Francisco. "Tuesday Night Jump," w/ Stompy Jones, 9 p.m., $10-$12.

Zingari: 501 Post, San Francisco. Brenda Reed, 7:30 p.m., free.

INTERNATIONAL

F8: 1192 Folsom St., San Francisco. "Underground Nomads," w/ rotating resident DJs Amar, Sep, and Dulce Vita, plus guests, 9 p.m., $5 (free before 9:30 p.m.).

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Yoshi's San Francisco: 1330 Fillmore, S.F. Christian Pepin, 8 p.m., $12-$14.

REGGAE

Milk Bar: 1840 Haight, S.F. "Bless Up," w/ Jah Warrior Shelter Hi-Fi, 10 p.m.

BLUES

Biscuits and Blues: 401 Mason, S.F. Chris Duarte Group, 7:30 & 9:30 p.m., $20.

The Saloon: 1232 Grant, S.F. Powell Street Blues Band, 9:30 p.m.|

EXPERIMENTAL

Center for New Music: 55 Taylor St., S.F. Kronos Quartet: Open rehearsal with Mary Kouyoumdjian, 7 p.m., free.

FUNK

Madrone Art Bar: 500 Divisadero, S.F. "Boogaloo Tuesday," w/ Oscar Myers & Steppin', 9:30 p.m., free.

SOUL

Make-Out Room: 3225 22nd St., S.F. "Lost & Found," w/ DJs Primo, Lucky, and guests, 9:30 p.m., free.

MUSIC A NEW COLUMN ABOUT WEIRD AND SCRAPPY ROCK

Stop Pining for the Past

And go see some small rock shows.

As you lay about wistfully re-watching that rock doc, pining for the excitement of yesteryear's music scenes, Kyle Crawford recognizes the inspired artists around right now. He started the tiny Wizard Mountain record label with a cassette duplicator, and championed Ty Segall's music years before David Letterman invited him on TV.

In an age of established musicians starting record labels, Crawford works in reverse. After releasing music from local bands like Rank/Xerox, Grass Widow, and the Traditional Fools on his record label, Crawford started a group of his own: **Generation Loss**, an unnerving rock act with Cold Beat's Hannah Lew on bass. The band name speaks to the potential mistakes of an era so obsessed with the past that we miss out on the present, a generational affliction Crawford actively resists. Generation Loss vies for the now along with scrappy local trio Scraper and Useless Eaters on **Friday, Jan. 24, at Hemlock Tavern**.



Tim Presley's White Fence is a powerhouse of homespun psychedelic pop. Woozy tape warble and pristine melodies weave together with a keen sense of songcraft. The recording process is so present and manipulated that it functions as another instrument. Considering that, I expected a floundering travesty in concert, the hapless confusion of a home studio project cast adrift on stage, but White Fence live is a compelling rock unit quite separate from its recorded incarnation. A recent live album recorded in San Francisco at Amnesia is testament to this, thanks largely to John Webster Johns, Presley's lead guitarist. Johns' solo project **Jack Name** comes to **Slim's on Friday, Jan. 24**; its debut, *Light Show*, bears a similar pop sensibility to White Fence, but where Presley's recording techniques impart kaleidoscopic psychedelia, Johns uses tape saturation like a nightmarish fun-house mirror.

If a rock song can't speak through just guitar, bass, and drums played together live on a stage, then adding extraneous racket, projecting disorienting visuals, or donning garish outfits probably isn't going to help. Good performances from a core few musicians will engage more than whatever supplementary gimmicks rock bands rely on. For that reason, trios have an especially strong pull on me, and Oakland's **BAUS** is a prime example of the small-band format.

It's rock, demystified, where the players' gestures correlate directly to the music: The athletic motions of BAUS' fretting hands look like the disjointed riffs sound; the drummer's anxious strikes correspond directly to the skittish grooves. Watching a performer whose movement is divorced from the sounds takes us out of the gig, but BAUS forces concertgoers to reckon with the minutiae, nuance, and physicality of rock performance like only a trio can. BAUS opens for Street Eaters and Alternative Tentacles Records' Japanese import Ultra Bide at the **Knockout on Tuesday, Jan. 28**.

SAVAGE LOVE GREAT PAINS

By Dan Savage

I'm a straight 24-year-old female, and I just recently lost my virginity. I've had sex only three times (not with a monogamous partner) and have found each time to be incredibly painful — even when the guy's just using his fingers. I've always been extremely sensitive. In the past, I've had guys run their hands over my jeans, and even that hurts. I brought this up when I went to my first ob-gyn appointment, and my doctor assured me that everything was normal down there. I know a lot of this may be psychological, but I wanted to know if I am just supposed to continue having sex to the point where it becomes pleasurable?

Tight Twat

"Although vaginal intercourse hurts some women the first time or two that they have sex, it's usually not 'incredibly painful,'" says Dr. Debby Herbenick, a research scientist at Indiana University, a sexual health educator at the Kinsey Institute, and the author of numerous books. "And women rarely experience pain when it's just fingers (unless the person is being really rough or has sharp fingernails), and especially not when someone is just running hands over jeans."

So something is up down there, TT, and you did the right thing by seeing a doc. "It's fantastic that she went to an ob-gyn so soon after starting to have sex," says Herbenick. "Unfortunately, many doctors have had little to no training in diagnosing or treating vulvar pain, something that groups like the National Vulvodynia Association (nva.org) have been working to change."

So you're going to have to see another doctor, TT, one who knows something about vulvar pain. Herbenick recommends that you find someone who "lives and breathes the vulva and vagina in their medical practice," and there are organizations that can help you find those livers and breathers. "TT can find such a health-care provider through the NVA or the International Society for the Study of Vulvovaginal Disease (issvd.org)," says Herbenick. "There are excellent vulvovaginal health clinics at the University of Iowa and the University of Michigan. The U.S. is really far behind other countries in the establishment of such clinics, but we're getting there. I dream of the day when every major U.S. city has one — and smaller places, too!"

For more info on vulvar and vaginal pain — and other sexual health and pleasure issues — get your hands on a copy of Herbenick's latest book, *Sex Made Easy: Your Awkward Questions Answered — For Better, Smarter, Amazing Sex*. And you can follow her on Twitter @DebbyHerbenick.

Five years ago, my wife and I decided to pursue her MFM threesome fantasy. Part of her fantasy was that the other chap have a BBC (big black cock), so we advertised and met this great guy who we've seen three times a year ever since. He is nice and open-minded, and we've become so comfortable with our BBC that we meet at our home now instead of a hotel. The issue I'm writing about is a problem with me. After our BBC ejaculates in my wife — everyone is tested and free of STIs — I enjoy going down on her, he enjoys watching me go down on her, and she enjoys having me lick the interloper's come from her pussy. The problem arises when our BBC isn't in the picture. We enjoy talking about our dirty threesomes, and we both talk about how hot it will be when I go down on her after I've unloaded in her myself. Unfortunately, once I've made my deposit, I have zero desire to go down on her. It's like someone flips a switch in my brain and something I couldn't wait to do is suddenly repulsive to me. This problem doesn't arise in our threesomes because our BBC always comes before I do. What is my issue? Is there a fix?

Can't Really Eat All My Pecker's Icky Emissions

So your regular third with the big cock is nice, open-minded, and STI-free. Sounds great, CREAMPIE, but how can you be certain about the STI-free part when you see him only three times a year? Unless he's abstinent the rest of the year, or unless you test before each of your threesomes, there's some risk here.

You also describe your regular third as "respectful," and that's great. We all deserve respectful sex partners. You do, CREAMPIE, your wife does — and so does your regular third. But referring to your regular third as BBC, or "big black cock," isn't respectful. Now, his big black cock brought you all together, of course, and it's fine to be attracted to others for particular physical attributes. It's also fine to explore racially charged fantasies so long as everyone is up for it and no one feels disrespected or dehumanized. But since this big black cock is attached to a fun and trustworthy guy who you enjoy spending time with, maybe you could refer to him as your ABC ("awesome black chum") instead of as your BBC?

Anyway, CREAMPIE, as for your problem: A man's body releases the hormone prolactin when he comes. That particular hormone makes a man sleepy, it makes his boner deflate, and it temporarily renders him indifferent to and/or repulsed by sex. So something that sounded hot right before you came — eating your own come out of the wife's pussy — is going to be much less appealing right after you come.

It's a snatch-22, CREAMPIE, and there's no fix.

I'm 45, female, and married to a smart, funny, intelligent 50-year-old man. We've been together nine years, married seven. The sex was good for the first year and then dropped off to nothing. He says, "I've had plenty of sex in my life. I'm just not interested anymore." During my first marriage, the sex was so bad that I thought, "If I could find a man who loved to cuddle, I could go the rest of my life without sex." Perfectly describes husband number two! Except now I feel more sexual than I ever have! I've discussed this with my husband endlessly and have mentioned open marriage, but nothing ever comes of it. Yes, he has had his testosterone checked. It's normal. What do I do? He's a great guy, he loves me and my grown kids unconditionally, but we are more friends/roommates than husband and wife. We have a safe, comfortable life, but I'm too young to go without that for the rest of my life!

Careful What You Wish For

He's done with sex, and you're not — so you get to fuck other people, and he doesn't get to say anything about it. Take a lover, CWYWF, take two. There are tons of men out there in sexless marriages that they don't want to end because they love their wives or they love their kids or they can't be bothered or all of the above. Get your ass online and find one or two. If your husband is against an open marriage in principle, tell him what he wants to hear and fuck other men regardless.

There's an upside to herpes, courtesy of science! At savagelovecast.com.

E-mail Dan Savage: mail@savagelove.net
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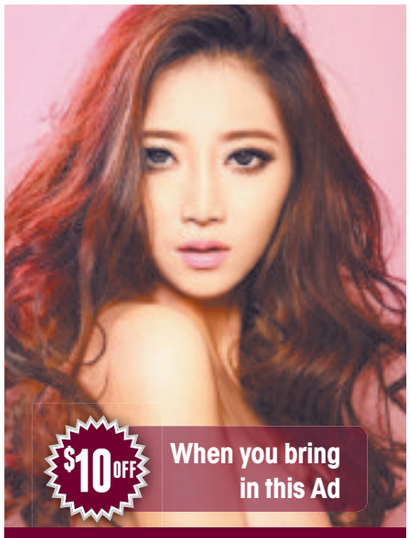


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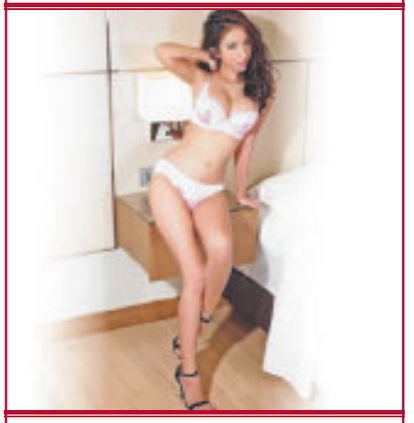


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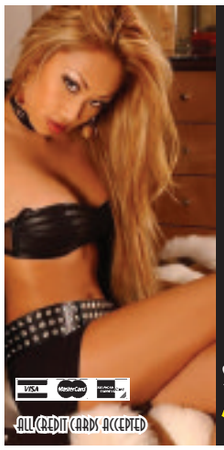
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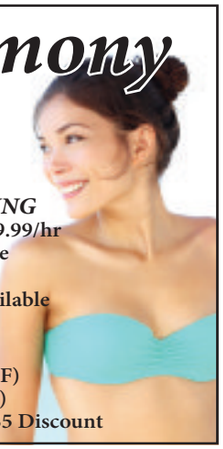
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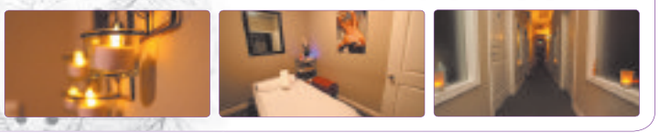
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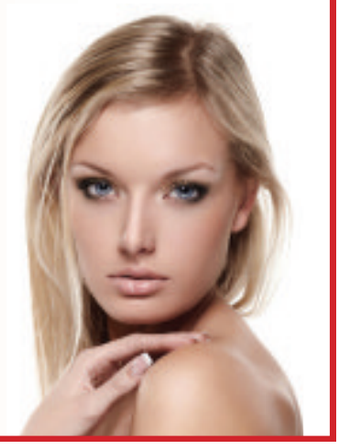
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